



Shri Shrinathji



Shri Balkrishnalalji (Surat)

JAGAD GURU SHRIMAD VALLABHACHARYA

Inspired By

Shri Nikunjalata Betiji

Compiled and Written by

**Mayank S. Neralla, Mandar S. Neralla,
Dewang S. Neralla**

Assisted by

Smt. Neeta Mehta

Sp. Acknowledgements to :

Shri. Manojbhai Mehta

Published By

Shri Gusainji Charitable Trust.

A/4, Rajneelam, Grd. floor,
Dr. Rajaballi Patel Lane
Bhulabhai Desai Road,
Mumbai - 400026.

Published and available at

Shri Gusainji Charitable Trust.

C/o. Shri Nikunjalata Betiji
A/4, Rajneelam, Grd. floor,
Dr. Rajaballi Patel Lane
Bhulabhai Desai Road,
Mumbai - 400026. India.
Te.: 367 8814.

C/o Surendrabhai Mehta
604, Makerchambers V
Nariman Point
Mumbai - 400021. India.

Tel.: (Off) 283 5295
287 5534
(Resi) 367 8554
364 0997

© All rights reserved

First Edition - Vikram Samvat 2058
Chaitra month, May -2002
Vallabhabd 525
Copies - 2000
Price Rs.

Printed by : **Utility Printers**
A/2 -155, shah & Nahar Ind. Estate
Lower Parel (w) Mumbai-400 013
Tel : 491 0066(6 lines)

Graphics by : **Veena Digigraph**
A/2 -37, shah & Nahar Ind. Estate
Lower Parel (w) Mumbai-400 013
Tel : 498 4234/5

Dedications

Late (Sharmaji) Shri Sunderraj Neelkanth Neralla



Birth - 28-4-1937 Golokvas (death) 5-11-1995

Heart felt dedications to our beloved father

Neralla Mayank S.	Sou Minakshi
Neralla Mandar S.	Sou Neelima Betiji
Neralla Dewang S.	Sou Nita

Mridul and Harshavardhan

FROM THE AUTHORS

With the grace of Shri Mahaprabhuji and great inspiration from our mother Shri Nikunjalata Betiji, we present our work on the life of Shrimad Vallabhacharyaji.

It had been our mother's wish to present a work like this by the people of this present generation. The task at first seemed impossible. Although coming from a solid background of Pushtimarg we did not have a precise idea of the exact chronological events of the life of Shri Mahaprabhuji. Therefore a great deal of reading and research was undertaken by us. A lot of differences in the dates pertaining to his life made the work extremely strenuous and difficult and called for a lengthy study of the various works on Shri Mahaprabhuji's life. All of us attempted to synchronize the dates according to the various treatises on Shri Vallabhacharyaji's life. With the help of our mother and help from our father we managed to accomplish this great task. The book had been compiled and completed by us a few years ago and through our mothers' efforts it is now coming before the world to read and understand.

For this book we are grateful to Smt. Neeta Mehta who has helped us to put this work together as a credible work of Pushti literature.

What seemed like an impossible task has been accomplished by us entirely due to the grace of Shri Mahaprabhuji. To write about him would be impossible unless he himself bestowed his grace upon, and, it is at his lotus feet that we are surrender this work.

We would like to express again our sincere gratefulness to our parents who have inspired and helped us to put this work together. Any mistakes which we may have unknowingly made in this work, are due to our own shortcomings.

It is our earnest wish that this work be accepted and read by a great number of people so that the divinity of Shri Mahaprabhuji be understood to its fullest.

Mayank S. Neralla
Mandar S. Neralla
Dewang S. Neralla

PREFACE

I have great pleasure in bringing forward this book on the life of Shri Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji for the benefit of those who are his devotees, and, also for those who would like to know about him and his life. For years, it had been my explicit wish to bring forward such literature especially in English, since there are readers both in India and abroad who cannot follow any language other than English. With the grace of Shri Govardhannathji we are presenting a book which depicts the life, the grace and the divinity of Shri Vallabhacharyaji.

It has always been my wish to project Shri Vallabhacharyaji as one of the great Acharyas of our times in line with Shri Shankaracharyaji, Shri Ramanujacharyaji, Shri Madhavacharyaji etc, since his achievements in the field of the philosophy and interpretations of Hindu scriptures has been of great prominence and importance in our country.

Many works in different languages (specially Gujarati and Hindi) have been written about Him in spite of that, I realize that people today do not know much about them. It is for the benefit of these people that I thought of writing his life story. It has always been my special endeavour to spread the beauty and the lofty ideals of Pushtimarg as given to us by Shri Mahaprabhuji and great man that have upheld the highest principles of pushti bhakti.

My pleasure here is two fold because this book has been written and compiled by a group of young writers (My Son Mayank, Mandar and Dewang) co-authored by Mrs. Neeta Mehta. All of them, members of the present generation and it gives me great satisfaction to specially mention and bless them as they have

understood my wishes and the way in which I wanted to present the life of Shri Vallabhacharya. Also the simplicity with which this book is written ensures me that people of all ages, all over the world will read and enjoy this book and understand Jagadguru Srimad Vallabhacharyaji.

This book is an honest endeavour to bring out different aspects of the character of Shri Mahaprabhuji. The book does not claim to be in a strict chronological sequence of Shri Mahaprabhuji's life but attempts to bring out the divinity of his multi-faceted personality through various anecdotes which reflect his greatness as one of the greatest Acharyas of our land.

My Special acknowledgment goes to my husband Late Shri Sunderrajji Sharma who has always encouraged all my activities connected to Pushtimarg. I also thank all the people who at various stages have helped my effort in bringing out this book. I specially bless Manojbhai Mehta for helping greatly to prepare and publish this book.

Nikunjalata Betisi

JAGAD GURU SHRIMAD VALLABHACHARYA

Chapter I

Introduction

For ages, India has been a land noted for its advanced spiritual ideas and experiences. Every aspect of spiritualism from the occult to advait and heights of pure devotionism have been a heritage of our land handed over to us by the great Rishi's and spiritual leaders.

Our land has not only been honoured by the spiritual presence of great men and women, but has time and again been blessed by the appearances of the divine power of the Almighty Himself. It is the land of the mighty Himalayas and the sacred flow of Ganga and Yamuna, a land honoured by the appearance of Rama, and Krishna, a land loved by their followers amongst whom are great men like Shri Ramanujacharyaji, Adi Shankaracharyaji, Madhvacharyaji, etc.

We are people belonging to a land whose guidelines have been the principles of the Vedas believed to have been spoken by the Lord Himself. Our religion and its beliefs are therefore a living embodiment of how a life should be lived. These principles have been interpreted in various ways from time to time by great philosophers and spiritual thinkers who have enriched our culture and religion by their sheer clarity of understanding and experiencing the divine.

Amongst these great Rishis and thinkers of our great religion, one name stands alone blazing the trail in the vast orbit of the universe of religion; Shrimad Vallabhacharyaji.

Shri Vallabhacharya is not only among the five great acharyas who have enriched and strengthened the Hindu religion, but also the founder of 'Pushti Marg' or the path of devotion through god's grace. He was the propounder of 'Shuddhadvait Brahmayad' and was a great scholar who preached Shrimad Bhagvat and interpreted its intricate principles in their original form as they should be. During his time, Hindu religion was often misrepresented, and misinterpreted and consequently misunderstood. Devotion had lost its meaning and people were puzzled at the concept of religion. Shri Vallabh saw this and set out to put things right and draw people back towards the religion in which they were losing their faith. It is this and the other various aspects of his life, that we intend to depict in this book giving a clear picture of Shri Vallabh's personality.

The Personality of Shri Vallabh

Shri Vallabh was divinity, peace and love personified. Being born as Vaishvanar or Agni Swaroop, his presence burnt away the very turmoils and mental discontentment of people who came to him. So loving was his personality and so soothing was his presence that people were attracted to him like iron to a magnet. He was one in speech, action and thought and living embodiment of Bhagvat Dharma which he persistently preached throughout India. Shri Mahaprabhuji, as Shri Vallabh is popularly known amongst his followers, loved every being equally irrespective of his caste or birth. He had followers from all walks of life from a king to a petty man. To him all were same, Souls who had forgotten the path of their life and atmas who finally had to be one with the Parmatma. Every disciple, every follower, and in fact every person who came to him received the love for Shri Krishna as his divine gift.

Sweet in face and forever composed, his personality was calm and serene; but his love for Shri Krishna was as fiery as the fire out

of which he was born. Titles and wealth held no temptations for this divine being. His single minded goal was to preach Shri Krishna Bhakti and nothing could stop him from achieving this goal. He performed many miracles in his life time, but they were not to prove his own powers rather to strengthen people's faith in Shri Krishna.

Being a great devotee or love personification of Shri Krishna, he was also a brilliant scholar who dazzled scholars and pandits by his literacy, logic and love of god. So brilliant was the dazzle of his knowledge that people could not help but love and respect him. It was his purity and divinity of spirit which attracted people towards him; and generations after him worship him with great love and call him Shri Mahaprabhuji.

The Philosophy of Shri Vallabhacharya

Shri Vallabh, from his very early age, was a great scholar of ancient Vedic scriptures, and was well-versed in every aspect of Hindu philosophy and religion. He had his own profound thinking and could interpret every verse in every scripture to its true meaning. His great learning and scholarly debates with various learned men earned him titles like Bal Saraswati, Acharya Shri Vallabh, Jagadguru, Shri Mahaprabhuji, etc. He was viewed with highest respect by every learned person and every Krishna devotee of his time.

From the very beginning, Shri Vallabh saw the chaos and the misinterpretations in Indian religious philosophy and set out with determination to correct them. He debated extensively with great scholars and learned men from every sect of the Hindu religion and earned their respect and admiration and began to interpret various scriptures and texts and their mantras more appropriately.

After the defeating Mayavaadi scholars and others similar to them, he propounded a philosophy called Shuddhadvait

Brahmavaad on the basis of four scriptures. He has accepted the supremacy of Vedas, Brahma Sutras, Bhagvadgita and Shrimad Bhagvat for basis of his philosophy lies in the oneness of their opinion which complement each other perfectly. It is the essence of the totality of what is said in these four above scriptures that becomes the basis of whatever he has propounded.

Through the philosophy based on the above four texts, he explained the relation of 1) Brahman - (God, Parmatma, Ishvara), 2) Atma - (Jiva, Soul, Spirit) and 3) Jagat - (Universe). He says Brahma is Sat, Chit, Anand - meaning, existence, consciousness and bliss. Brahma is Pure Bliss (Poorna Anand) and it has its own form. All Devas (celestial beings) worshipped by us are different manifestations and aspects of the same supreme Brahma. Brahma is truth. Similarly, Brahma has created this Jagat or Universe and is also the truth. Atma or Jiva is a tiny part of this Brahma element and is separated from Brahma the way sparks are separated from a blazing fire. Atma is a tiny part of parmatma, but it is not Parmatma Himself because once it enters the Jagat it surrounds itself with ego and illusion in the form of I and Mine. It, therefore becomes imperfect by losing its Anand or Bliss. Atma is Sat and Chit, but since it is not Anand, it is not God. And bliss can be achieved only by pure devotion towards Brahma.

Not only Brahma is Niraakaar (without form), but also Saakaar (with form), and, qualified, or, 'Sadharmak'. But the quality and the form are not worldly nor illusionary, and are above the state of the three gunas (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), i.e., Brahma is Alaukik, Amayik and Aprakrut. Brahma is the cause and means of Jagat (the universe), so Jagat is truth in itself.

In direct opposition to Shri Shankaracharya's Mayavaad, Maya according to this philosophy is not an independent entity but one of the many powers of Brahma. This brings us to

understand that Shri Mahaprabhuji propounds two things mainly: That Brahma is a combination of opposites Vedas on one hand say that Brahma is without qualities (Nirgun) and formless (Nirakaar) while on the other hand Vedas also say that it is qualified (Sagun) and has various forms (Saakaar) and to accept only one view would mean denial of the other which means accepting only half the truth which would mean Vedas are self contradictory and since Vedas are the breath of God, they cannot be so. Therefore we have to accept that Brahma is Viruddha Dharmashrayee or a perfect combination of opposites. Shri Mahaprabhuji further says that Brahma is permanent. Its existence is permanent.

The cycle of creation and annihilation which we know are not the attributes of Brahma but they are actually manifestation and non-manifestation which again forms the basis of the concept of Jagat or universe. Hence Brahma is truth and permanent. It is existence and bliss, but Jagat due to its manifestation and non-manifestation lacks the permanence of Brahma but is definitely a part of Brahma and is therefore truth. Jeeva is also accepted as a part of Brahma as it has the truth and existence quality of Brahma but because it is bereft of the bliss element it is not Brahma itself.

Besides this Shri Mahaprabhuji accepts Akshara Brahma' as a part of 'Parabrahma making them different entities, while the other acharyas say that Akshara Brahma is Supreme, Shri Mahaprabhuji says that beyond the Akshara Brahma is a greater power - the Parabrahma. As Akshara is qualityless & possesses limited bliss, Parabrahma is qualified with various forms and is complete bliss which is its essential form (Poorna Anand). which is non-dualism without the concept of Maya. It establishes the truth and the relation of Jeeva Jagat & Ishvara - since the universe and the soul are manifestations of Brahma they are essentially are him. Their relation with Him is that of a part of a whole and this is Brahmavaad in its pure form.

This Brahma being the cause of the universe cannot be realized only by knowledge but by pure devotion, and therefore Shri Mahaprabhuji inculcates 'Nirguna' Bhakti or selfless devotion into Pushti Marg as a way to achieve the supreme. This devotionism as propounded by Shri Mahaprabhuji is independent and different of all other forms of devotion because according to his principles this devotion is both the means and the end by itself. It is the effort and the fruit by itself. In this he differed from the different Acharyas and propagators of religion. This is therefore which sets Pushti Marg apart from the other sects of Hindu religion giving it a distinct flavour of its own. This becomes the base of his theory of Shuddhadvait Brahmavaad.

Thus he advocated the path of pure devotion so that Atma can reach Parmatma and this he did by establishing Pushti Marg or path of unconditional love to Shri Krishna, who, according to the scriptures, is Absolute Brahma. He based this on the sayings of Shri Krishna as told by Shri Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagvad Gita. The first principle that Shri Vallabh propounded in Pushti Marg was Self Surrender or Samarpan. From every person who followed him, Shri Vallabh demanded total self surrender at the feet of Shri Krishna. Thus giving Brahma Sambandh and relating every person to God, and promising to love him and worship him with absolute devotion and faith.

Srimad Bhagavat and Srimad Bhagvad Gita were the basis of everything that Shri Mahaprabhuji said, thought, and did. In fact, he recited Srimad Bhagavat at various places while touring the entire country. Today these places are popularly known as his Baithakjis or Holy Seats. His life was a personification of the highest ideals of Srimad Bhagavat. Though a householder, he was a true ascetic at heart; for, in word, deed, and thought, he was truly dedicated to Shri Krishna.

Chapter II

Shri Vallabhacharya was the fourth child of Shri Laxman Bhatt, a Vaideeki (Velanadu) Brahmin. His ancestors were renowned for their scriptural knowledge and lived a life of spiritualism as shown in the Hindu religious texts. They lived in Kankarvad, a town on the southern banks of river Krishna, in the vicinity of Mount Vyomasthamba in what is presently known as Andhra Pradesh. One of his ancestors, Shri Yagnanarayan Bhatt (Kambhampaty), was a great scholar of his time, and a great devotee of Lord Krishna and regularly performed *Som Yagnas*. One day while performing a Som Yagna¹, Lord Krishna appeared from the holy flames of the altar, blessed him and promised that he would manifest himself in Yagnanarayan Bhatt's family after the completion of one hundred Som Yagnas. Yagnanarayan Bhatt went on to perform 32 Som Yagnas and his son, Gangadhar Bhatt, performed 28 Som Yagnas. Gangadhar Bhatt's son, Ganapati Bhatt, performed 30 Som Yagnas, and his son, Vallabh Bhatt, performed 5 Som Yagnas. Vallabh Bhatt had two sons- Laxman Bhatt, and, Janardhan Bhatt.

The hundredth Som Yagna was completed by Shri Laxman Bhatt, the great, great grandson of Yagnanarayan Bhatt, when he conducted 5 Som Yagnas. Shri Laxman Bhatt was a renowned scholar of his time. He married Yallamagaru and Illamagaru, the two daughters of the royal priest, Susharma, of Vidyanagar. Laxman Bhattji belonged to the sect of Vishnu Swami and worshiped Lord Gopal Krishna. He was initiated by Premakumara Muni into the Vishnu Swami sect with the Gopal Mantra.

Shri Laxman Bhatt continued to live in Kankarvad for a while, but in a battle with a rival king, the city was destroyed. This forced Laxman Bhatt to leave Kankarvad and settle down in the city of Agrahar. It was here that his son Ram Krishna and his two

* Som Yagna : One of the many Yagnas performed in Hindu religion.



Shri Vallabha after the birth encircled in fire - Champaranya

daughters - Subhadra and Saraswati were born. Shri Laxman Bhatt went on a pilgrimage to many holy places and later settled down in Kashi (today's Varanasi). He was famous for his noble behavior and refined knowledge in the entire Kashi region.

The dominant and forceful Muslim invasion of Kashi caused chaos in the entire region, and a lot of people fled from Kashi. Fearing violence, Shri Laxman Bhattji, along with his pregnant wife, Illamagaru, decided to return to the place of his ancestors.

On their way, they reached a forest called Champaranya near Raipur district in Madhya Pradesh. Due to terror and the physically painful journey, Illamagaru gave birth to a child, two months prematurely. Taking the child to be still-born, Illamagaru placed it under a Shamee tree*, wrapped in a piece of cloth covering it with leaves. She then walked away to be with her husband and told him about the birth of a still-born baby. The parents sadly proceeded to the nearest town of Chaura. It was the Eleventh day of the dark half of the *Chaitra Krishna Ekadashi of Vikram Samvat 1535, (1479 A.D.) That night Illamagaru and Shri Laxman Bhatt had a dream. Lord Krishna appeared in their dream and told them that He had manifested Himself in the form of their child that they had left behind and asked them to go back and get the child and take him along with them. Immediately, the couple left for the forest to see their child. When they returned to the spot they were amazed to find their child cheerfully playing, enveloped in a circle of flames.

Illamagaru was overcome with motherly love and affection, and wondered how she would collect the child from the midst of the flames. But to her astonishment, the fire parted to make a way for her when she rushed towards the child. She picked up the child in her arms and affectionately tucked the child to her bosom.

Shamee* A kind of tree

* Month of Hindu Calendar



Shri Laxmanbhatt, Shri Illamagaru and child Shri Vallabh

Taking the child, the couple left for Chaura where Seth Krishnadas, a disciple of Shri Laxman Bhatt, received them warmly into his house. He was a minister in Chaura. He honoured them and provided them with all the facilities pertaining to the nursing and recovery of the mother and the child.

After a few days, Shri Laxman Bhatt showed his desire to proceed further to the south. Seth Krishnadas requested Shri Laxman Bhatt not to commence the arduous journey with an infant and asked them to return to Kashi as many people had reported normalcy in Kashi. Shri Laxman Bhatt agreed to the proposal and left Chaura and returned to Kashi with his family.

Naming Ceremony

On reaching Kashi, on the 11th day from the day the child was born, Shri Laxman Bhatt performed a naming ceremony of the child according to the Vedic rites. A pandit was invited to perform the ceremony. After referring to the astrological charts, he proposed the name Krishnaprasad and Janardan according to the month, and Shrivasta according to the nakshatra (stars). But Shri Laxman Bhatt aptly called his son Vallabh, or the dear one, as the child was the beloved of the entire family.

Childhood

As a child, Shri Vallabh was extraordinary. In interests as well as intellect he differed from all children of his age. While the others were engaged in playing with toys, Shri Vallabh would be interested in holy scriptures. For hours he would watch his father worshipping and serving the Lord. He showed divine inclinations early on from his childhood and this surprised everyone around him. The first signs of spiritual inclinations were visible in him since his early childhood and his divine powers were also revealed to every

one at that early age. Once it so happened that Seth Krishnadas had presented a cow named Payoda to Shri Laxman Bhatt. This cow died suddenly one day leaving Shri Laxman Bhatt very sad. On seeing his father's grief, Shri Vallabh approached the dead cow and started fondling it and also he offered it some grass. To everyone's surprise, the cow started breathing softly and chewing the grass. Shri Laxman Bhatt was delighted to see his cow and was astonished to see the miraculous powers of Shri Vallabh.

While playing with other children, he would prefer to act like a Guru (teacher), rather than a King and teach them. This was a clear sign of his inclination for the life he was going to lead later on.

Sacred Thread Ceremony and Education

In Vikram Samvat 1542 (1486 A. D.), Shri Laxman Bhatt performed the Upanayan Sanskar (Sacred Thread Ceremony) of Shri Vallabh. Shri Laxman Bhatt initiated Vallabh with the Gayatri Mantra and the Gopal Mantra. Shri Vallabh had a very high intellectual level and an extraordinary retentive memory.

Throughout his thread ceremony, a Brahmin tried to interpret the Gayatri Mantra as referring to Shakti, i.e. mother Goddess. On hearing this, Shri Vallabh, even at such an early age, disputed that interpretation and propounded that the Gayatri Mantra is the energy of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Lord of the entire Universe.

Shri Laxman Bhatt took a keen interest in educating young Vallabh. He started the education of his son at a tender age of seven years. Shri Vallabh learned the four Vedas from the specialists of individual Vedas, and Taittiriya Samhita of the Krishna Yajurved from his father (this Veda was specially studied by the family

lineage). Tirumal guided him through the Rigveda and the Samaveda, Narayan Dixit taught him Panini, Gautam and Kanaad's work. He also learned many other scriptures from him. From his Guru (teacher), Madhavendra Yati, he learned Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Narad Panchratra, and many other scriptures.

Shri Vallabh was so brilliant in his studies that he had to read or hear the scripture only once to memorize it. Before he was in his teens, he had acquired mastery not only over the books stating the six systems of Indian philosophy, but also on the philosophical works of Shankar, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka, Buddhist as well as the Jain texts. At the age of ten, he became a renowned scholar of Kashi. The pandits of Kashi were astounded and spellbound at the profound expanse of his knowledge of philosophy. They honoured Shri Vallabh with the title of Bala Saraswati. His amicable personality and fluent oratory was admired even by the scholars and the followers of other sects. No sooner had he finished studies, his father died in samvat 1546 (1490 A. D.) submerging into the divine form of Shri Tirupati Balaji.

Chapter III

Pilgrimage

Shri Vallabh's education in ancient vedic scriptures, his divinity and the religious and social environment of the country forced him to think about re-evaluating the basics of Indian philosophy and interpret the scriptures in their true form. He had this persistent wish to inculcate in Hindus the profound principles of Bhakti or Divine Love for Lord Krishna. This could only be done by interaction with the people, throughout the length and breadth of the country. To fulfill this wish he decided to embark upon extensive journeys, reaching every nook and corner of India. Thus, after his father's death, he travelled throughout the entire stretch of this vast country. As he travelled he absolved the sins of past and present births of devotees and led them towards pure and simple living. By his grace not only humans, but even Goblins (Brahma Rakshasas) and pythons (ajgar) were delivered. By his divine touch even a cow's statue came to life (Bahula Van). He purely did this to prove that presence of Lord Krishna is in everyone and everything, moving and unmoving.

His pilgrimages were not only to the holy places but also to remote villages and towns. He zealously pursued his mission of spreading Krishna Bhakti, giving new strength and vigour to the people who were losing their faith in the values of religion in their lives. This mission started at a very early age of twelve. In the course of these tours, many important and specific incidents took place which were noteworthy from the point of view of philosophy, religion and realization of the higher values of life, and the sublimation of one's own self.



Pilgrimage

With his mother's permission, Shri Vallabh embarked upon a pilgrimage to the holy places of India. Along with four disciples of his father, Shambhu, Swayambhu, Vibhu and Swabhu, he started towards Kankarvad (his ancestor's land). They proceeded to Chitrakoot and then to Champaranya (his birth place), where he camped for a few days below a Shamee tree. Here, for the first time, he recited Srimad Bhagavat for seven days. His mother, brothers and sisters joined him from Champaranya, after performing the Shraadh* ritual of his father in Gaya. From Champaranya they proceeded to Vruddhinagar (presently, Wardha).

First Disciple - Damodardas

As he journeyed along, people were being attracted by his extraordinarily divine personality and became his disciples. In Wardha, a 16-year old boy, Damodardas Harsani, on seeing Shri Vallabh's persona, was so overwhelmed that he immediately joined him as his disciple and remained with him throughout his life time.

Damodardas Harsani was the fourth son of Seth Kapoorchand Harsani, who had left behind sufficient wealth as inheritance. Damodardas Harsani had forsaken his father's wealth and home forever to perform devotional service at the feet of Shri Vallabhacharya. He was later to become the first disciple of Shri Vallabhacharya in the Path of Divine Grace or Pushti Marg.

The norms of Krishna Bhakti were already established in the mind of Shri Vallabhacharya by his late father as he was a follower of Vishnu-Swami Sampradaya. This Sampradaya was one of the leading sects of Shri Krishna Bhakti in Southern India which had emphasized the adoration of Lord Krishna as the Supreme Power of the Universe. At many places and on many occasions Shri Vallabh

debated with many followers of the various sects of Hinduism. He discussed various aspects of the vedic philosophy and was very convincing about his point of view and principles; and therefore, highly appreciated and admired even by his opponents. His mellifluous oratory and deeply convincing power of his knowledge commanded respect from everyone and they proclaimed him an eminent propagator and interpreter of the philosophy.

To The Land of Ancestors

When Shri Vallabh and his entourage reached his ancestral native place Kankarvad (Andhra Pradesh), people accorded him a very warm reception. The re-union of the family was a very happy occasion for all of them. His uncle, Janardan Bhatt, was very happy to receive Shri Vallabh and his family. He was highly gratified to see his nephew growing in spiritual and intellectual life with the promise of a great career before him. Many learned people came to see Shri Vallabh on hearing about his extraordinary attainments.

Illamagaru's brother, Vidya Bhooshan invited Shri Vallabh to his residence in Vidyanagar. Shri Vallabh decided to go to Vidyanagar and requested his uncle, Janardan Bhatt, to give him a scripture of Srimad Bhagavat (that belonged to Sri Gangadhar Bhatt), an idol of Shri Mukundrajiji* and Shaligramji (that belonged to Nandraiji - Lord Krishna's father). Janardan Bhatt gladly gave him what he had requested. During all his tours, Shri Vallabh kept the idols with him and worshiped them with great devotion.

Uncle Janardan blessed Shri Vallabh and on an auspicious day, they started to proceed towards Vidyanagar. This time Ketu, Kamandalu, Lakutalouki, the disciples of Shri Laxman Bhatt also joined Shri Vallabhacharya.

* Religious Rites performed after the death of a person

* One of the names of Shri Krishna

Bala Saraswati

On their way, they visited Venkatesh Laxman Balaji. He was recognized as Bala Saraswati. Here a pandit named Ravinatha, tried to test Shri Vallabh's knowledge of vedic mantras. Shri Vallabhacharya correctly recited a hundred mantras, not only from beginning to end, but also in the reverse order. He also answered the questions asked by the pandits. It was particularly in this town that he made a strong impression on the public as an embodiment of knowledge and consequently he was recognized as Bala Saraswati.

At Laxman Balaji, he heard about a sensational debate being conducted at Vidyanagar between Vaishnavites of Madhva and Shankarites (Mayavadis) over the philosophical question of which is the foremost sect of Hinduism. Upon hearing that the Mayavadis were scoring a victory over their opponents, Shri Vallabhacharya was determined to participate in the discussion as this was his duty.

Krishnadas Meghan

After achieving tremendous success and fame, Shri Vallabhacharya left Vidyanagar and camped on the banks of Pampasarovar (this place is associated with the memory of Lord Shri Ramachandraji). Here, a person named Krishnadas Meghan surrendered himself at the feet of Shri Vallabhacharya.

Krishnadas Meghan was a resident of Soramji, a village situated near Mathura. He was told by his guru that Lord had incarnated on earth. He was told this on the day Shri Vallabhacharya was born. Hearing this, he left his native town and toured all over India in search of the incarnation of the Lord. On his way he

reached Vidyanagar, where he was told about the glorious success and the divine personality of Shri Vallabhacharya. He left immediately for Pampasarovar. On meeting Shri Vallabhacharya, he realized that his search was over. He became an ardent devotee of Shri Mahaprabhuji (as Shri Vallabhacharya is popularly called) and always remained in his service throughout his life.

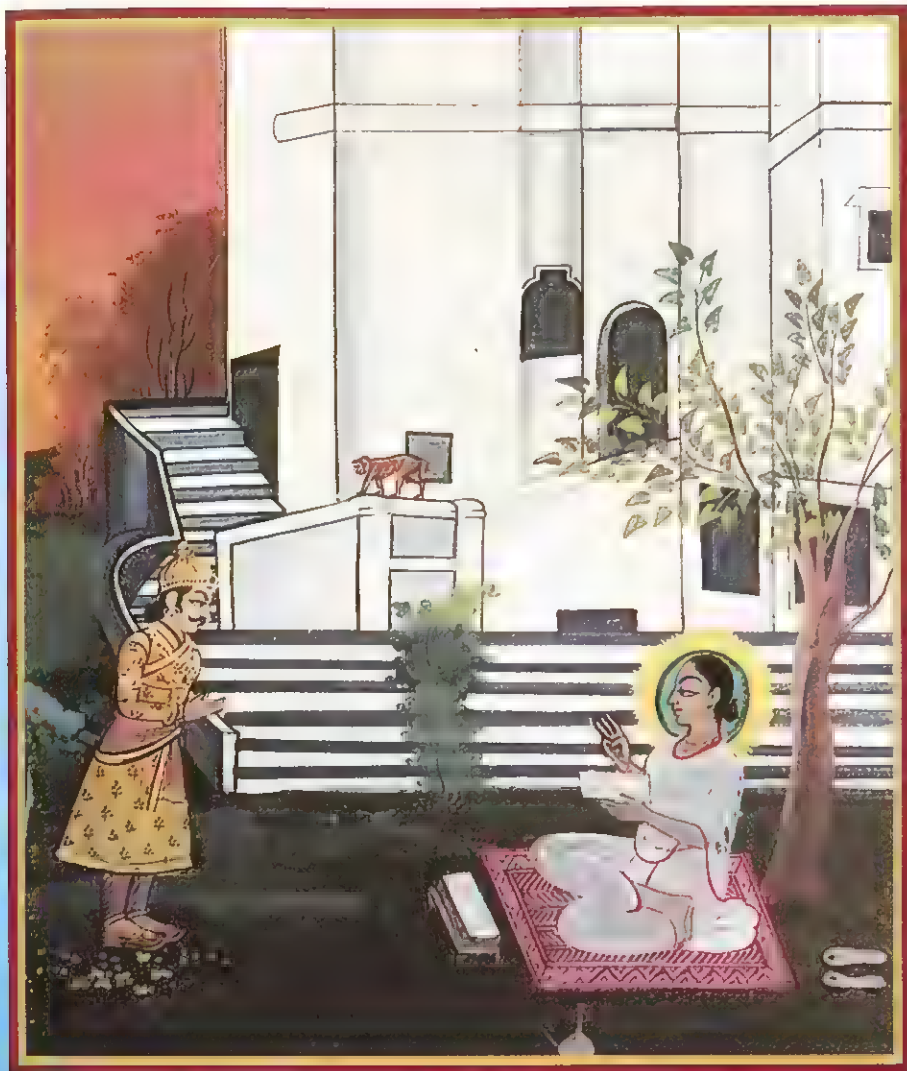
Life To The King of Palayamkota

From Pampasarovar, Shri Vallabhacharya went to Mount Rishyamukh. He then proceeded to Vishnu Kanchi, Srirangji, Trichi (via Chidambaram), Madurai, etc. While traveling in the South he camped on the banks of river Tamraparni located near the city of Palayamkota. The king of this place was suffering from a severe illness and was on his death-bed. No medicine was good enough to cure him of this fatal illness. As a last resort, astrologers and experts on occultism were consulted and they referred to the King's illness as Kaal-Jwar - a curse of destiny which could be remedied by donating a gold statue of Kaal to a Brahmin.

The King proclaimed his intention of donating such a statue. Many brahmins came forward, but lost courage when they faced the scary statue. The situation was such that no Brahmin in the region dared to confront the statue. The King was exceedingly troubled over this. He forced his Raj-Purohit* to accept the donation. The Raj-Purohit was scared at the thought of facing the statue. With a worried look, he went to the banks of river Tamraparni where he met Shri Mahaprabhuji who took pity on him. He called one of his disciples and bestowed on him Divine Powers by sprinkling Charnodaka* on him. He asked him to accompany the Raj-Purohit and accept the donation.

* Chief Priest in the court of the king

* Holy ritual performed everyday by brahmins after thread



As per Shri Mahaprabhuji's instructions, the disciple offered to accept the donation. He felt no fear on seeing the statue. The statue pointed a finger at him. In reply, the young man pointed three fingers in the direction of the statue. The statue bowed before the disciple. The king donated the statue to the young man. The disciple's hands turned black on receiving this donation and he asked the King to cut the statue into pieces and distribute the gold to the Brahmins. The King felt a miraculous relief after the donation and the hands of the young man became normal after the distribution. The King inquired about the identity of the man and was told about Shri Mahaprabhuji and his disciple. The King and his Queen went to the banks of River Tamraparni and requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to grace the palace with his presence. When Shri Mahaprabhuji reached the palace, the King along with his wife and the servants became his disciples. He requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to explain the behavior of the statue. Shri Mahaprabhuji explained, "The statue pointed one finger at the young man telling him that he could accept the donation only if he performed the Sandhya* at least once a day. The young man in his reply pointed three fingers at the statue indicating that he performed Sandhya thrice a day and so the statue bowed before him. The hands of the young man turned black because he accepted such a donation. He came back to normal as he donated the gold to the other Brahmins. Shri Vallabhacharyaji had never given any importance to materialistic things in life and his disciples too followed in his footsteps.

After the King became his disciple Shri Maha-prabhuji preached to him the principles of Ahimsa*, Dharma and Daan - or charity. He preached that every religious ceremony should be performed in adherence with the principles of non-violence and killing for ceremonial sacrifices was wrong and did not yield any positive fruits. Generosity should also be practised but donations should be given and accepted carefully with proper diligence, otherwise it could

* Non-violence

* Water after washing the feet of a Diety or a saint

yield adverse results. He blessed the royal couple and advised them to have faith in Lord Krishna, and continued on his pilgrimage.

Shri Vallabh then proceeded to Rameshwaram and other places in the South where he came across various yogis, pandits, etc. Some of them challenged him to a debate with them but Vallabhacharya with sheer clarity of intellect and interpretation of Vedic Texts proved his ideas and philosophy successfully.

Meeting With Lord Shri Vitthalnathji (Pandurang - Pandharpur)

Pandharpur is a well-known religious place of Maharashtra. At Pandharpur Shri Mahaprabhuji camped on the banks of river Bheema (now river Chandrabhaga) opposite the famous temple of Lord Vitthalnathji (Vithoba). Lord Vitthalnathji came to Shri Mahaprabhuji and they embraced each other joyfully. Later, during Shri Mahaprabhuji's second visit to Pandharpur, Lord Vitthalnathji asked Shri Mahaprabhuji to get married so that the Lord Himself can incarnate in his family. Shri Vallabh accepted the Lord's command. Here he stayed for a few days and gave discourses on Srimad Bhagavat.

From Pandharpur, Shri Mahaprabhuji visited Nasik and Trimbak. Then on, he proceeded to the banks of River Tapti and then on to River Narmada visiting various shrines situated on the banks of these rivers. From here he left for Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh).

Miracle at Ujjain

The ashram* of Sage* Sandipani was situated near Ujjain. Lord Krishna and Sudama lived in this ashram during their Gurukul* days. Shri Mahaprabhuji intended to visit the place where

the Lord had received his education. Reaching the place, Shri Mahaprabhuji was grieved at the sight of a barren land at the place of Sage Sandipani's Ashram without any presence of a tree or chirp of birds. Chanting the name of his Lord, Shri Mahaprabhuji planted a leaf of a banyan tree in the ground. The next morning, the leaf had turned into a big Banyan tree. People of Ujjain were greatly impressed on seeing this, and the divine personality of Shri Mahaprabhuji attracted them towards him.

Some learned Brahmins, jealous of Shri Mahaprabhuji's name and fame, came for a debate with him. Shri Mahaprabhuji defeated these Brahmins within a matter of few minutes. Defeated, depleted, and feeling insulted, and unable to bear the insult of losing, these Brahmins then asked another hundred other Brahmins to ask questions to Shri Mahaprabhuji. All the hundred Brahmins asked one question each to Shri Mahaprabhuji simultaneously. At this, Shri Mahaprabhuji using his divine powers, manifested 100 faces of himself and answered all 100 questions at the same time. The people of Ujjain on seeing this hailed the divine power of Shri Mahaprabhuji and surrendered themselves at the feet of Shri Mahaprabhuji.

Ghata Saraswati Defeated

Shri Mahaprabhuji proceeded further on his journey and reached the city of Orchha, situated on the banks of River Vetravati. King Ramachandra was the ruler of this city. Shri Mahaprabhuji had heard from some Brahmins about a mystical pandit called Ghata Saraswati, who was vain about his learning and had captured Goddess Saraswati (Goddess of Learning) in a pitcher by the means of black magic! Ghata Saraswati had earned favours from the king by demonstrating his mystical powers before him. He

* Residential schools run by Hindu Rishis; also known as Gurukul.

* Teacher of Lord Krishna



***Shri Vallabhacharya debating with
various scholars in the south***

had defeated many great scholars with the help of Goddess Saraswati. Hearing this, Shri Mahaprabhuji decided to defeat Ghata Saraswati. A debate was arranged in the court of King Ramachandra. The King accorded a cordial welcome to Shri Mahaprabhuji. As soon as Shri Mahaprabhuji saw Ghata Saraswati with the pitcher, he realised the evil game of the pandit. He immediately released the goddess from the pitcher of the wily pandit through his spiritual powers. Now the Goddess Saraswati was no more under the control of Ghata Saraswati.

The debate began. Shri Mahaprabhuji answered all the questions asked by Ghata Saraswati, but Ghata Saraswati could not answer any of Shri Mahaprabhuji's questions. Shri Mahaprabhuji was declared the victor. The King arranged a great function in the honour of Shri Mahaprabhuji, and performed the Kanakabhishek ceremony. The King offered him a great amount of wealth and properties in the state of Orchha. Shri Mahaprabhuji declined all the offers and advised the King to worship Lord Krishna as the Supreme Power of the Universe. The King, along with his family members and the courtiers took the oath of initiation from Shri Mahaprabhuji and became his followers.



Lord Krishna appearing before Shri. Mahaprabhuji at Govind Ghat

Chapter IV

Visit to Vraj Bhoomi*

Shri Mahaprabhuji loved Vraj Bhoomi as it is the land of his beloved Lord Shri Krishna. When Shri Mahaprabhuji reached Mathura, he was unhappy because of the atrocious administration of the Muslim ruler Sikander Lodi. A few people from Mathura, under the leadership of Ujagar Chaturvedi, came to see Shri Vallabh and complained about the atrocities of the Muslim administrator of Mathura. Since six months, no one had been able to go to River Yamuna, either for worshipping or bathing. Rustam Ali, a local administrator of Mathura, on the advice of the *Kazi¹, had arranged to hang a device on Vishram Ghat (one of the banks of river Yamuna at Mathura). If any Hindu was to pass under it, he would lose his choti* and a Muslim beard would appear on his face. Shri Mahaprabhuji consoled the people and asked them to accompany him for a bath in river Yamuna. This time nothing happened to the people who passed under the device. He had made the device ineffective with his spiritual powers.

Shri Vallabhacharya tried to persuade the Muslim administrator to remove the ban on worship of the Yamuna but he never heeded any of his words. Shri Vallabh then decided to teach Sikander Lodi a lesson. He sent a few of his disciples to go to Delhi which was Sikander Lodi's capital and asked them to hang a device prepared by him at the gates of the city. The device had such magical powers that if any Muslim were to pass under it, he would lose his beard and a choti would appear on his head instead!

Sikander Lodi came to know of this and ordered his soldiers to remove the device from the gates, but no one could do so! He

* Vast area of land around the river Yamuna in Uttar Pradesh where Shri Krishna was born and performed the divine Leelas of his childhood.

* Minister of Law

* Lock of hair on head

called one of the disciples of Shri Mahaprabhuji, who boldly conveyed the message of Shri Vallabhacharya for removing any sort of religious curbs in Mathura and allowing the Hindus to follow their religion. Sikander Lodi realized the divine powers of Shri Mahaprabhuji and ordered his soldiers to remove the device hung by the administrator at Mathura. Shri Mahaprabhuji stayed in Mathura for a few days and recited Srimad Bhagavat and then continued with his journey to Gokul.

Gokul

Along with his disciples like Damodar Das Harsani and Krishnadas Meghan and others, he arrived in Gokul. This was the early childhood place of Shri Krishna. While on the banks of river Yamuna, Shri Yamnaji appeared before him and he praised her by spontaneously composing and reciting Shree Yamunashtakam Stotra. He camped at Gobind Ghat where he gave discourses on Srimad Bhagavat.

Brahma-Sambandh*

While in Gokul, Shri Vallabhacharya was deeply concerned about the question of restoring the people to the path of devotion. He was once in deep introspection about the spiritual upliftment of the people. It was past midnight when he was exceedingly troubled by this question, Lord Krishna appeared before him in the form of Shreenathji and told Shri Vallabhacharya to initiate the people on the path of Complete Self Surrender to the Lord with love and modesty and simplicity through Brahma-Sambandh. The Lord promised Shri Vallabhacharya that He would accept the services of all the devotees initiated with the Brahma-Sambandh. The Lord gave him the Gadya-Mantra*, as an explanation of the five syllable mantra and Shri Mahaprabhuji was very happy.

* Establishing relationship with Parabrahma Parmatma (the highest supreme)

* Prose Mantra by which he could
initiate into Pustimarg. 22

Shri Mahaprabhuji garlanded the Lord with a cotton thread garland (Pavitra) and offered him misri (crystals of sugar). As soon as the Lord disappeared Shri Mahaprabhuji composed Shri MADHURASHTAKAM praising the form and beauty of Shri Krishna the way he appeared before him. This was on the 11th day of Shravana Shukla of Samvat 1549. This occasion is celebrated in the sect as the day of Pavitra Ekadashi. It is also known as the day of the birth of Pushti Marg (Path to Grace of God).

Brahma-Sambandh is a means of complete dedication and surrender of self to the Lord. Brahma-Sambandh means the establishment of a renewed relationship between the soul and God in which the soul accepts the relation as a servant (das) with the Lord as the master. It means that the primary salvation of the soul from all sins lies with him. With this new relation with God, the soul becomes completely free from all sins provided it remains faithful to the vow of surrender it has taken and it goes on growing in the Grace of God. The Lord accepts the services of such devotees.

Next day, on Shravan Shukla 12, Shri Mahaprabhuji initiated Damodardas Harsani with the Holy Mantra. This made Damodardas the first Vaishnava in the path of Divine Grace, i.e., Pushti Marg.

Thus, Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharya innovated a method for the welfare of mankind. Now anybody could take Brahma-Sambandh, irrespective of caste, creed, race, color, wealth, age or sex. He gave* Brahma-Sambandh to many people and wrote a stotra*, Siddhanta Rahasya to explain the importance of Brahma-Sambandh and the basic principles of Pushti Marg.

* The Brahma Sambandh Mantra is in a Prose form an 84 syllabled Mantra which is an extension of the five syllabled Mantra
or Pancha Akshar Mantra. 23

* Stotra - Hymn

From Gokul, Shri Mahaprabhuji returned to Mathura where he made a decision to go on a journey across Vraj. In the month of Bhadrapada, the eleventh month of the Hindu calendar, he took the oath for circumambulation of Vraj (Vraj Yatra). After departing from Mathura, he camped at Madhuvan, and then proceeded to Talvan, and then onto Bahulavan.

Life to a Cow at Bahulavan

During Vraj Yatra when Shri Mahaprabhuji reached Bahulavan, people came to him and complained about the ban on worshipping an idol of a cow.

A cow had shown astounding bravery by facing a lion. Impressed by this, after the cow's death, the people of Bahulavan made a temple in honour of this cow and put a stone idol in the temple for worshipping. The Muslim administrator of that area had banned the worship of this cow and had put out a notice reading, "Worshipping, this lifeless cow is a serious offence and is punishable by death." Shri Mahaprabhuji asked the Muslim officers to remove the notice, but they refused. Shri Mahaprabhuji simply patted the idol of the cow and offered her grass to eat. After some time, the cow started to chew the grass and pour milk from her udders and started moving. This incident amazed the officers. They realized the divine powers of Shri Mahaprabhuji and were humbled forever.

Manifestation of Shreenathji

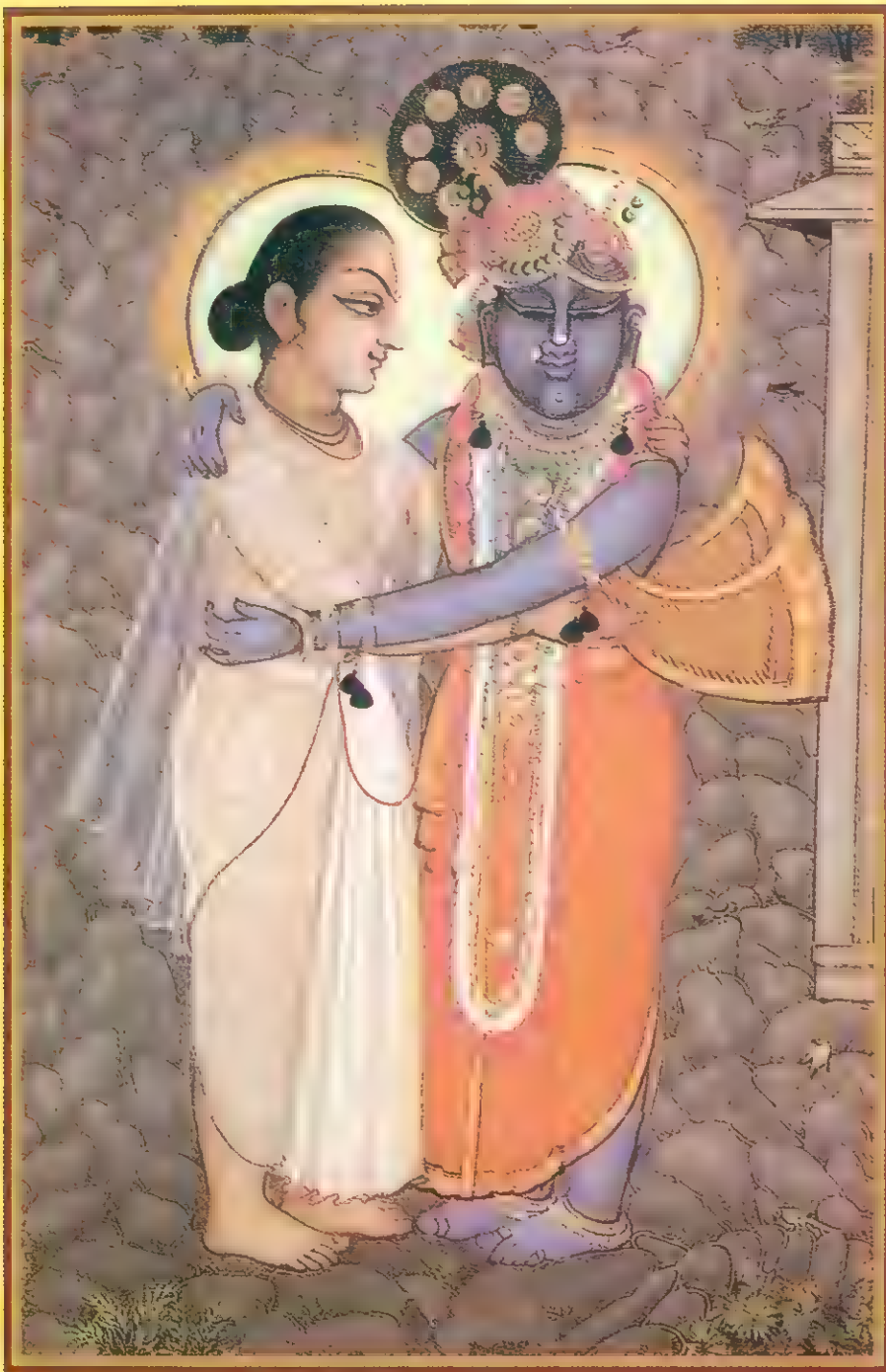
When, along with his followers, Shri Vallabhacharyaji reached Anyor, a village situated on the foothills of Mount Govardhan (Shri Girirajji), he stayed at the house of Sadu Pandey, a

Vrajvasi (resident of Vraj), who had nearly 1000 cows. While Shri Vallabh was resting there, he heard a sweet, melodious voice asking for milk from Naro, daughter of Sadu Pandey. The voice was similar to the one he had heard before in the forests of Jharkhand. He at once recognized the voice of Shreenathji. Sadu Pandey, his brother Manikchand, and other Vrajvasis gathered near Shri Vallabh and started narrating the story about the emergence of a hand of Lord Shreenathji.

In Samvat 1466, on the day of Naag Panchmi (Shravan Shukla Panchami, according to the Hindu calendar), the left hand of the deity of Lord Shreenathji appeared on Mount Govardhan. The people of the Vraj started worshipping the hand. They had great faith and belief that all their wishes would be fulfilled by offering milk to the hand of the deity.

Later, after about seventy years, in Samvat 1535, the face of the deity appeared. This was on the day of the birth of Shri Vallabhacharyaji. Sadu Pandey's cows grazed daily around Mount Govardhan. One day, he noticed that one of his cows had stopped giving milk. Wanting to find out the reason, he followed it up and saw the cow pouring milk from her udders at a particular spot. This cow was named Dhumar and belonged to the breed of cows reared by Shri Nandraiji, father of Lord Krishna.

Sadu Pandey, Manikchand and few other villagers went to that spot. They removed a few rocks from that spot. To their great amazement and disbelief they saw that the Lord had appeared in the form of Shreenathji. They noticed that the deity was indeed very beautiful. The body was dark and lovely with an attractive face. His right hand was on the waist, the left as if lifting a mountain, eyes were like lotus petals and He was wearing a big



'Pratham Milan' the first meeting of Shreenathji and Shri Mahaprabhuji

garland on His person. Shreenathji told them that he was Deva-Daman* who had manifested Himself here and will not emerge from there till Shri Mahaprabhuji himself would arrive. He then asked Sadu Pandey to deliver milk twice a day from the same cow, Dhumar. Sadu Pandey started sending milk through his daughter, Naro.

Shri Mahaprabhuji was very happy on hearing from the Varjvasis about Shreenathji. Next morning, along with Damodardas Harsani, Krishnadas Meghan, and other Vrajvasis*, he climbed a top the Mount Govardhan. When Shri Vallabh reached the top, Lord Shreenathji rushed towards him and they embraced eagerly.

Shri Mahaprabhuji enshrined the deity in a small temple on Mount Govardhan. He appointed Ramdas Chauhan for the divine service (seva) of Lord Shreenathji and also asked Sadu Pandey and some others to look after him. It was the third day of the Vaishakh Shukla month of the Hindu Calendar. The day is known as Akshaya Tritiya. The form of Shreenathji represents Lord Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan in his hand for the purpose of protecting the people of Vraj from the wrath of Indra, the God of Rain. When Indra had sent a devastating thunderstorm as vengeance against the Vrajwasis for not performing a Yagna in his honour, Lord Krishna had protected them by lifting up Mount Govardhan over Vraj.

Sage Chaturanaga

Once when Shri Vallabhacharyaji was camping in the beautiful jungle of Kokilavan, Sage Chaturanaga came along with 1000 of his followers to meet him and requested him to feed them. Five litres of milk was brought to prepare Kheer* for them. Damodardas and other followers were worried about feeding so many guests with only five litres of milk. Shri Mahaprabhuji smiled and touched the vessel and by

* Name of Shri Krishna as he subdued the pride of all devatas or celestial gods.

* People resident of Vraj known as Vrajvasi

his divine touch, the cooking vessels became Akshaya Paatra (Akshaya means never emptying, and, Paatra means a vessel). All 1000 followers had Kheer to their hearts content. Sage Chaturmaga highly impressed with this, requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to make him his disciple.

Salvation of a Goblin at Kamvan

When Shri Mahaprabhuji was at Kamvan he camped under a tree close to a pond. The people of the area informed Shri Mahaprabhuji that a goblin lived in that pond and killed people who camped there overnight.. They requested him to spend the night elsewhere but Shri Mahaprabhuji did not change the place.

Later at night, the goblin came out of the pond and rushed towards a disciple who was initiated with Brahma-Sambandh. The goblin saw the Tulsi bead necklace (Kanthi) around the disciple's neck. It became furious but could not go near the disciple due to the purity and sanctity of the necklace and the power of Brahma-Sambandh. Early next morning Shri Mahaprabhuji asked the disciple to wash his loin cloth (dhoti) and squeeze it on the goblin, which had hidden in the pond. The disciple did as he was told. No sooner had he done this, the goblin came out of the pond with a burst and disappeared into the skies. He received salvation and now there was no danger. People of Kamvan had heard a blast and few people had also witnessed a cloud of dark smoke going towards the skies and realized that it was the liberation of the goblin.

As the news of the goblin's salvation spread around people assembled to express gratitude to Shri Mahaprabhuji and came to regard him as God.

* A Sweet Dish prepared form rice andmilk.



With Chaturanaga in Kokilavan (Vraj)

Release of Python in Ghahavarvan

From Kamvan, Shri Vallabhacharyaji proceeded further on his Vraj Yatra. While passing through Krishna Kund in the jungles of Ghahavarvan, he saw a huge python lying dead. Thousands of ants around it were cutting through its thick skin and biting its flesh. Shri Mahaprabhuji took pity on the python and asked one of his followers to sprinkle holy water of his feet (charnodaka) on the python. With the touch of the holy water, the python attained moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). Shri Vallabhacharyaji told his followers that in its previous birth this python was a Guru who used to cheat his followers, who, were now reborn as ants. He then explained the chief character traits of a guru to Damodardas and put across his ideas of a perfect guru according to our scriptures.

Chapter V

Gujarat

From Vraj, Shri Mahaprabhuji went to Pushkar Teerth near Ajmer in Rajasthan. Then he crossed Rajputana (Rajasthan) border and entered the state of Gujarat. In Gujarat, Siddhapur was the first town visited by Shri Mahaprabhuji. Mohammad Begda was the ruler of Gujarat. He had released an order that no one could pass in a palkhi (palanquin - a carriage lifted by 4 persons on the shoulder) in front of his palace. Once, when Sultan Begda was standing on the balcony of his palace he saw Shri Mahaprabhuji passing in a palkhi without getting off. Instead of getting angry, the Sultan was stunned by the divine aura of Shri Vallabhacharya. The Sultan realized his mistake and cancelled his orders. Shri Mahaprabhuji never gave in to the whims of any king or commanders against unjust orders and this was a social revolution by itself when people followed in his footsteps and learnt to rise against injustice and falsehood.

From Siddhapur, Shri Vallabhacharya went to Patan which was a stronghold of Jainism. Here the disciples of Shri Mahaprabhuji had a discussion on religion and philosophy with the leaders of Jainism. Shri Mahaprabhuji's disciples won the debates and the people of Patan hailed the name of Shri Mahaprabhuji.

During one of his tours to Gujarat, Shri Mahaprabhuji was camping at Kheralu. A poor Brahmin widow came to him and told him that she had to work very hard to maintain herself and her two children and that under these circumstances it was extremely difficult for her to find the path to get salvation. She added that many people showed her various ways, which made it even harder for her to know which was the best among them. Shri Vallabh was deeply

touched by her desire to know the truth. He told her that in order to find God it was not necessary to relinquish the world or practice asceticism of any kind, but that the only thing needed was to love him totally with one's heart and soul. He added that what God desired from human beings was total surrender at his feet, while doing their duties towards their families. She then became his disciple and Shri Vallabh gave her a small idol for worship. This widow holds a high place amongst the followers of Pushtimarg. Her two sons, Jagannath Joshi and Narahari Joshi, became so well known for their learning and faith to Shri Vallabh that they came to be ranked amongst the eighty four disciples of Shri Vallabhacharya. Although Shri Vallabhacharya had many disciples, there were eighty-four who were his main disciples. While travelling through Gujarat, Shri Mahaprabhuji camped at various places and recited Srimad Bhagavat. Hundreds and thousands of people were attracted towards the religious discourses of Srimad Bhagavat and Pushti-Marg, and many became his disciples.

Once while giving a discourse on Srimad Bhagavat to a group of people at Shankhodwar in Saurashtra (Gujrat), suddenly there was a heavy downpour of rain. Seeing that the people were very much engrossed in the discourse, Shri Mahaprabhuji with his divine power prevented the rain from falling in that area so that it did not disturb his followers.

He visited Junagadh, and also other places in Saurashtra (Gujarat) Preaching his doctrine of love and grace of God, Shri Mahaprabhuji reached Dwarka*. In Bet-Dwarka, he installed an idol of Lord Dwarkadheeshji at the request of the people there.

Blessings to the Diseased Boy

Shri Vallabhacharya travelled to many important places in Gujarat and Saurashtra and then towards Sindh via Kutch. In

Kutch, he visited a lake, Narayan-Sarovar. Here, a Minister of the Ruler of Sindh province approached him for his blessings on behalf of his son, Narayan, who was a crippled and diseased child.

Mahprabhuji with great sympathy, blessed the boy. Uttering the name of Lord Krishna, he passed his hand over the boy's body. The boy was completely cured, without a trace of any defect on his body. The boy became Shri Mahaprabhuji's disciple. Experiencing this mercy and grace the minister and his wife surrendered themselves before Shri Mahprabhuji and requested him to visit their house at Nagar Thatta. When Shri Mahaprabhuji reached Nagar Thatta he was accorded a very warm reception by the minister and the people of the city.

Muslim and Buddhist Disciples

In Sindh (presently in Pakistan), the head of an Islamic sect and a Magadh Buddhist came to Shri Vallabh-acharya inquiring about the doctrine of Ahimsa. Shri Vallabh-acharya explained that according to the Vedic religion, the use of violence or non-violence is relative to the specific circumstances in a particular situation and there can be no universal or uniform rule about them. On hearing this, they were greatly impressed by Shri Mahaprabhuji and they renounced their own religions and became his disciples. This Muslim then became a famous devotee of Lord Krishna and was known as Arya Khan. Similarly, the Magadh Buddhist also became a true devotee of Lord Krishna. From Sindh, Shri Vallabhacharya went to Prahaladadri (Mount Prahalad) which is believed to be the place of incarnation of Lord Narasimha.

Vyas Ashram

During his pilgrimage, Shri Mahaprabhuji, passing through Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Hrishikesh and Lakshmanjhula,

* An important holy city in Gujarat associated with Shri Krishnas divine leelas

entered the region of the Himalayas. During all his three tours across the Bharatkhand (India), Shri Mahaprabhuji visited the region of the Himalayas. In those days there were no proper roads nor any transport facility was available for reaching these places. These difficulties however didn't prevent him from visiting this region during all his tours. He visited Kedarnath and Badrinath and at both these places he recited Shrimad Bhagavat.

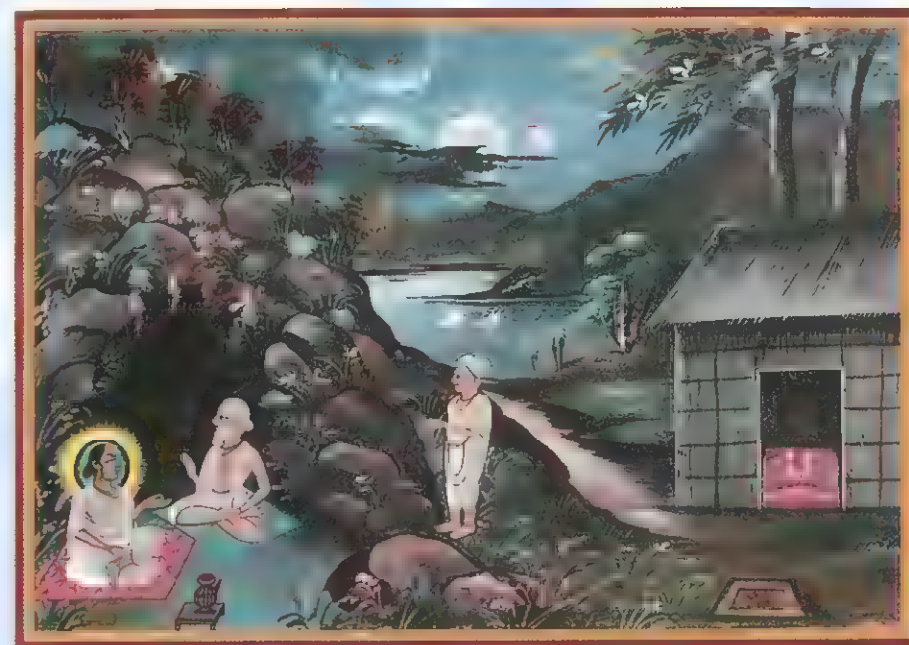
When Shri Mahaprabhuji along with his disciple Krishna das Meghan visited Veda* Vyas's Ashram which is two miles from Badrinath, they saw a huge boulder rushing downwards with great force towards them. Krishnadas Meghan, by Shri Mahaprabhuji's grace stopped the boulder by holding it with his hands for three days and three nights and waited there for Shri Mahaprabhuji. Pleased with Krishnadas Meghan's devotion, he granted him three wishes.

During his second pilgrimage, when Shri Vallabhacharya came here, he discussed with Veda Vyas many points on Srimad Bhagavat. On completion of the discussions, Vyasji asked him to marry and to enter into Grihasthashram*

Jagannath Puri

Shri Vallabhacharyaji came down to Haridwar from the Himalayas. Then having visited many places of religious prominence, he finally reached Mount Vindhya (Vindhyachal). He then turned eastward and travelling through many places, he reached Jagannath Puri.

The King of Kalinga (present day Orissa), Lokraj Dev, had a deep interest in holding religious conferences of learned people. When Shri Vallabhacharya arrived at Puri an assembly of scholars was in full swing. The King had asked the



At Vyas Ashram Badrinath

Discussing with Vyasji - the writer of eighteen purans (including Shrimad Bhagavat) standing is - krishnadas meghan the disiple of Shri Vallabh who stood there for three days & three nights.

* Ved Vyas - a Writer of 18 Puranas

* Householder's life

scholars four questions. Seven days had passed, but no scholar could satisfy the King and there was a great conflict between the followers of various sects. The King of Puri invited Shri Vallabhacharya to the court. In the court the King asked him the same four questions that he had put forward to the assembly of scholars :

1. Which is the Principle Scripture?
2. Which is the Supreme Deity?
3. Which is the most Holy Mantra?
4. Which is the Principal Karma (Which work is the most important)?

Shri Mahaprabhuji in his reply said that: 1) Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the Principle Scripture, 2) Lord Krishna is the Supreme Deity, 3) His name (Shree Krishna Sharanam Mama) is the most holy mantra, and, 4) Service to Lord Krishna is the only true Karma. Thus, Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharya, in his answers to the four questions by the king, glorified lord Shri Krishna.

Shri Vallabhacharya was so convincing and impressive that all the listeners including the King were spellbound. Many scholars felt envious and jealous and asked Shri Mahaprabhuji to prove that his answers were correct by seeking the approval from Lord Jagadish himself. Paper and ink were put in front of Lord Jagadish, to seek his verdict, and the temple doors were closed.

When the gates opened for the next darshan, people saw that the blank paper had the same reply written on it. This incident raised Shri Mahaprabhuji very high in the esteem of the King who declared him as the worthiest of the Acharyas of the Hindu religion and became his disciple. From Puri, Shri Vallabh went towards Mount Mandara, then to Mount Mahendra and crossing the river Godavari returned to Agrahara, the ancestral place of his family (Andhra Pradesh).



At the Temple of Shri Jagannathji, Jagannathpuri (Orissa)

एकंशास्त्रं देवकीपुत्र गीतम्
 एको देवो देवकी पुत्रमेव ।
 मन्त्रोप्येक तस्य नामानियानि
 कर्माप्येकं तस्य देवस्य सेवा ॥

Marriage of Shri Mahaprabhuji

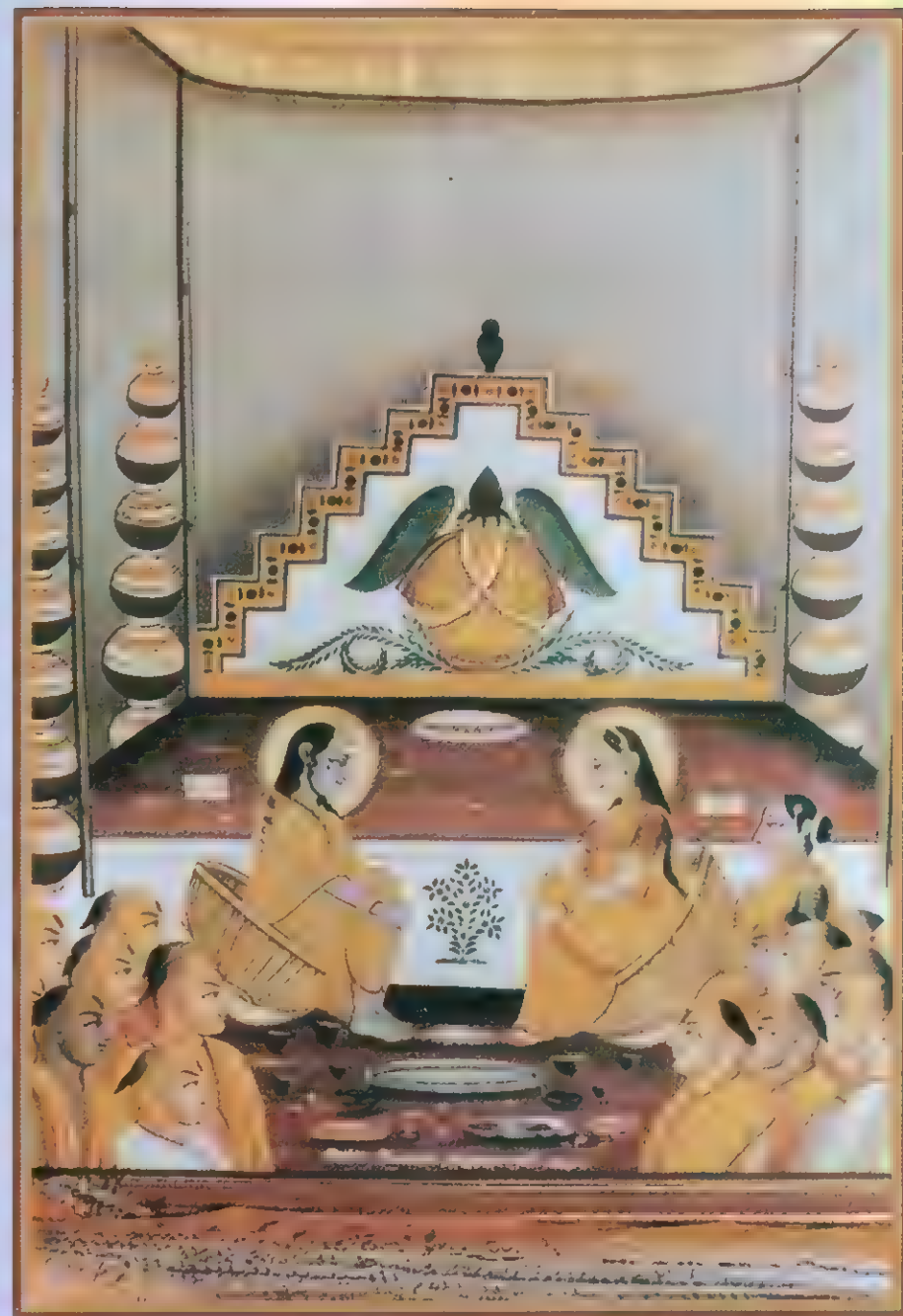
Once when Shri Vallabhacharya was residing in Kashi, a Tailang Brahmin of his own caste Dewan Bhatt, came to meet him and told him about the dream that he had in which Lord Vitthalnathji (of Pandharpur Maharashtra) had ordained him to marry his daughter Mahalakshmi to Mahaprabhuji. Instantly, Shri Mahaprabhuji remembered the ordinance that was given to him by the Lord to marry and start a householder's life. He sent one of his disciples to go to Agrahara and accompany his mother, Illamagaru, and, his uncle, Janardan, back to Kashi to settle the marriage.

After the arrival of the elders of the family and sisters and brothers, on an auspicious day of Ashaadh Shukla 5 of Samvat 1558, the grand marriage of Shri Vallabhacharyaji and Shri Mahalakshmi was solemnised in the presence of the family members, relatives, disciples and great scholars and pandits of Kashi.

After being married to Mahalakshmi, Shri Vallabh stayed in Kashi for about six months, after which, he decided to resume his mission of preaching Krishna Bhakti and embarked upon an extensive journey throughout India. This journey began in the year Samvat 1559. He reached Agra via Manikpur, and went to Girirajji, where building of a new temple for Shreenathji was underway. Then travelling through various places, he arrived at Vidyanagar (Andhra Pradesh).

Title of Jagadguru and Kanakabhishek

Shri Vallabhacharya reached Vidyanagar where his maternal uncle, Shri Vidyabhhooshan, gave him a cordial reception and honoured his sister and Shri Vallabhacharya and arranged for their stay in the city. During this time Vidyanagar was ruled by King Narasimha but was actually controlled by King Krishnadeva Raya.



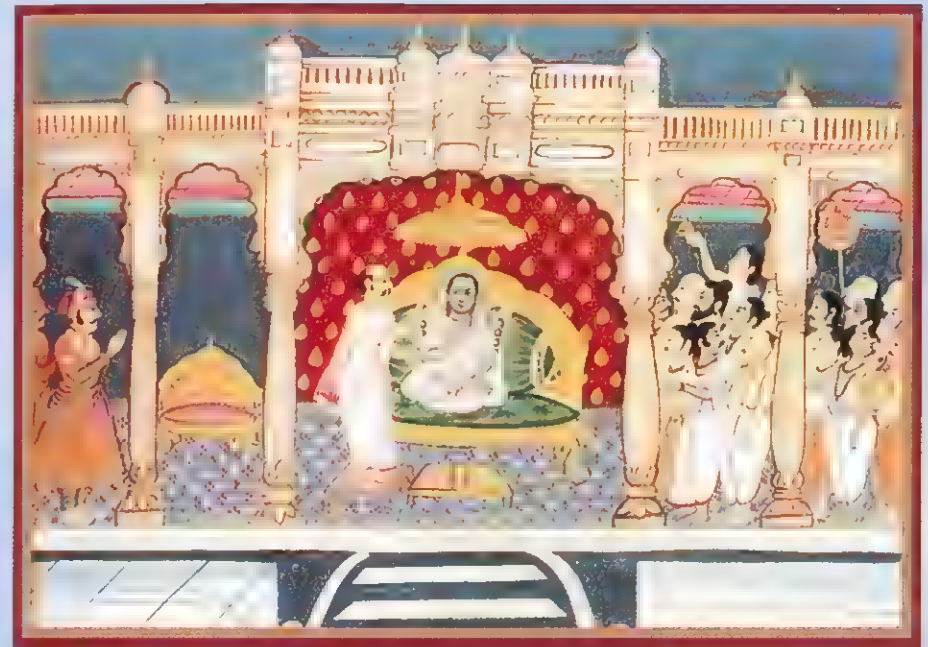
Wedding Ceremony of Shri Vallabh

The Kings' wife was a follower of the Madhva sect. Vidyannagar in those times was a seat of higher learning where scholars of different sects gathered and held debates.

Shri Shankaracharya, Vidyateerthji, representing the Kevaladvaita Vad of Adi Shankaracharya was on one side, and, Shri Madhvacharya, Vyasteerthji, representing the various Vaishnava sects and philosophies was on the other side. Vidyateerthji wanted to establish the supremacy of Mayavad or the philosophy of Illusionism as the highest theory of Hindu religion. He so puzzled Vyasteerthji, his opponent with his complicated arguments that Vyasteerthji could not refute them and solve the problem. This compelled the followers of the Shankara sect to force the King into declaring Mayavad as the best theory of Hindu religion.

When Shri Vallabhacharya heard about the defeat of Shri Vyasateerthji he sent a disciple, Kamandalu, with a message to the King, that he would be taking part in the debate. The next day, Shri Vallabhacharya entered the court of King Krishnadeva Raya. Amazed at seeing his divine personality, the people gathered there including the King, the pandits and the other Acharyas, stood up as a mark of respect. Shri Vallabhacharya expressed his desire to discuss with Shri Vidyateerthji on the side of Vaishnavism. King Krishnadeva Raya honourably gave him a seat and asked them to continue the discussion.

Shri Vallabh entered into the debate, rejected the theory of Mayavad as supreme and propounded a new doctrine of Shuddhadvait Brahma Vad with Shri Krishna as the Supreme Brahma. Discussions continued for 28 long days. Shri Vallabh not only rejected Vidyateerth's arguments but logically and precisely proved his own arguments on the basis of Vedas, Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, Brahma Sutras, and Srimad Bhagavat, leaving Vidyateerth and other scholars



Kanakabhishek at Vidyannagar, Andhra Pradesh

Here he defeated Mayavaadis and propounded the philosophy of Shuddhadvait Brahmavaad and was hailed and honoured as "Akhand Bhumandalacharya Varya Jagad Guru Mahaprabhu Shrimad Vallabhacharya"

totally speechless. King Krishnadeva Raya declared Shri Vallabhacharya as the winner in the debate, and the philosophy propounded by him as "Shuddhadvait".

A large crowd assembled before the court to witness the grand ceremony. Shri Vallabhacharya, accompanied by a few of his followers, was received at the court hall by the King, where all stood up as a mark of respect. Then, Shri Vyasteerthji proclaimed the King's decision in honouring Shri Vallabhacharya by the Kanakabhishek ceremony, anointing him with water from the vessels of gold weighing a 100 maunds and by conferring on him a long series of titles such as JAGADGURU, SHRIMAD ACHARYA, MAHAPRABHU, etc. There was a general atmosphere of gaiety prevailing in the city of Vidyanagar. People were seen singing hymns and dancing on the streets with joy.

The King requested Shri Vallabhacharya to accept the gold used in Kanakabhishek. Damodardas Harsani intervened and told the King that the gold could not be accepted, just as one does not use the water already used for the purpose of bathing. He asked the King to distribute the gold among the poor Brahmins and the learned.

King Krishnadeva Raya, greatly impressed by the personality, knowledge, and the Brahma Vad (the Shuddhadvait) theory of Shri Vallabhacharya, surrendered himself along with his family and requested Shri Vallabhacharya to accept them as his disciples. Later, as a disciple, he presented 7000 gold coins to Shri Mahaprabhuji, from which he accepted only seven coins and offered them to Lord Vitthalnathji. Shri Vyasteerthji, the leader of Madhva sect was so impressed by Shri Vallabh that he requested Shri Vallabh to assume the responsibility as the head of the Madhava sect, but he humbly declined the offer. The news of Shri Vallabh's Kanakabhishek reached every nook and corner of the country.

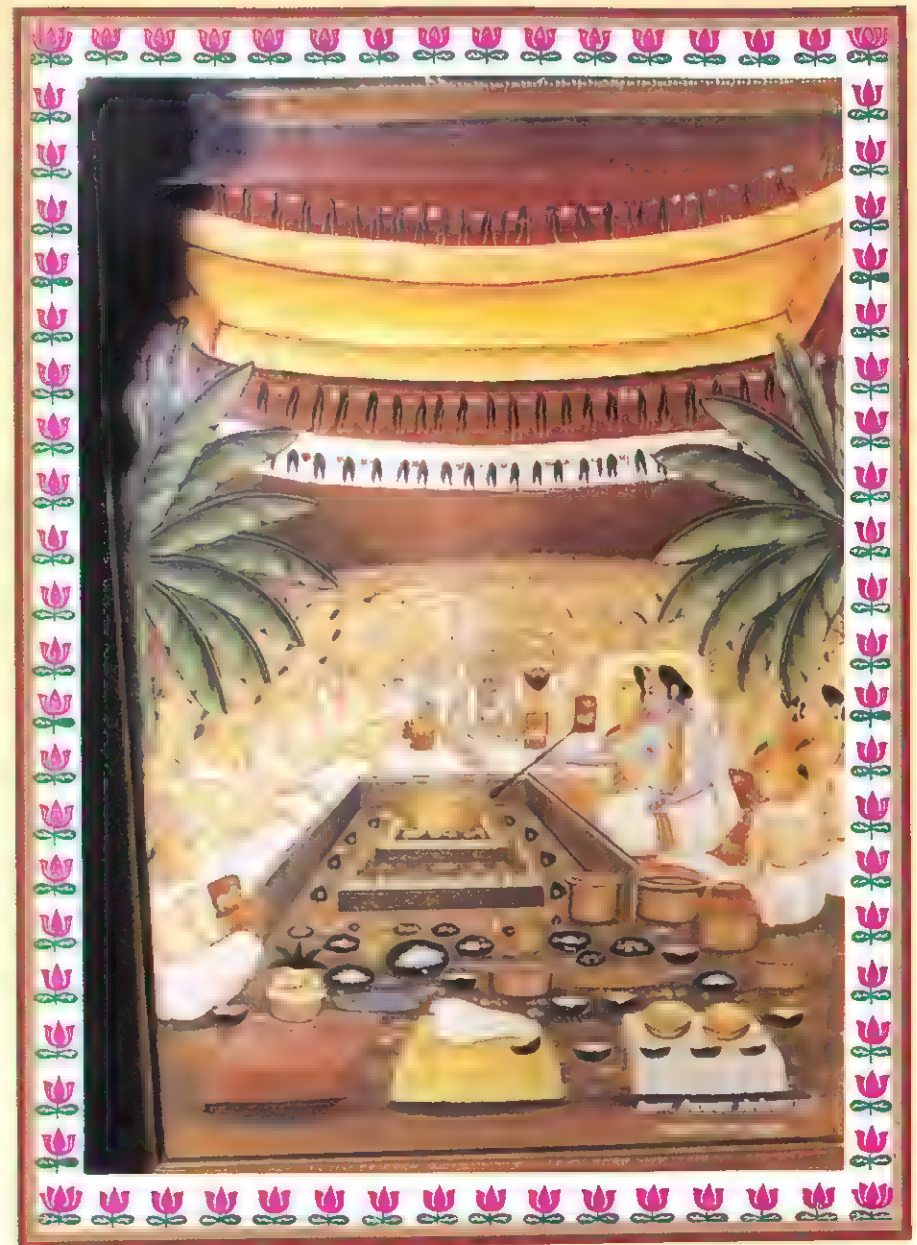
From Vidyanagar, he started his journey towards different places in South India which were of religious and academic importance. During these tours he also visited the birth places of the previous acharyas. He visited the places of pilgrimage on his way and bathed in the waters of the holy rivers, which he crossed during the journey.

He had philosophical discussions with other acharyas belonging to the different sects and everywhere he included the principles of Brahmavaad and answered the queries of scholars. Impressed by his profound erudition, people from all walks of life, from Kings to commoners, from high castes to the lower castes and even Muslims became his disciples.

Chapter VI

After finishing the third round of his pilgrimage, Shri Mahaprabhuji decided to reside in Kashi for some time where he hosted a feast for as many as thirty thousand Brahmins. Some so called pundits of Kashi were envious of Shri Mahaprabhuji's fame which was spreading across the country. So they provoked other scholars to invite him to debates and discussions and defeat him. But due to clarity of his thoughts and the perfect interpretations of the scriptures, Shri Mahaprabhuji defeated every scholar who debated with him.

The pandits later resorted to issuing pamphlets denouncing Shri Mahaprabhuji's work on Brahma Vad and the sect of grace and love, Pushti Marg. This went on for a considerable period of time. Shri Mahaprabhuji issued a booklet refuting the contentions raised by the pandits in vindication of his own principles. This booklet was in the form of various open letters and the pages of these were displayed near the gates of the Kashi Viswanath Temple (a famous Lord Shiv temple in Kashi). This was titled Patra-Valambana in which he refuted the Mayavad theory and upheld the Brahma Vad theory. The ideas and thoughts written in this booklet were not only profound, but so accurate that most of the scholars thought it fit to copy them for further reference. So precise was Shri Mahaprabhuji's understanding of the scriptures that his opponents had to finally agree with his philosophy.



Shrimad Vallabhacharya and Shri Mahalaxmiji performing Yagna



With Rana Vyas of Godhara (Gujarat)

Life Rana Vyas

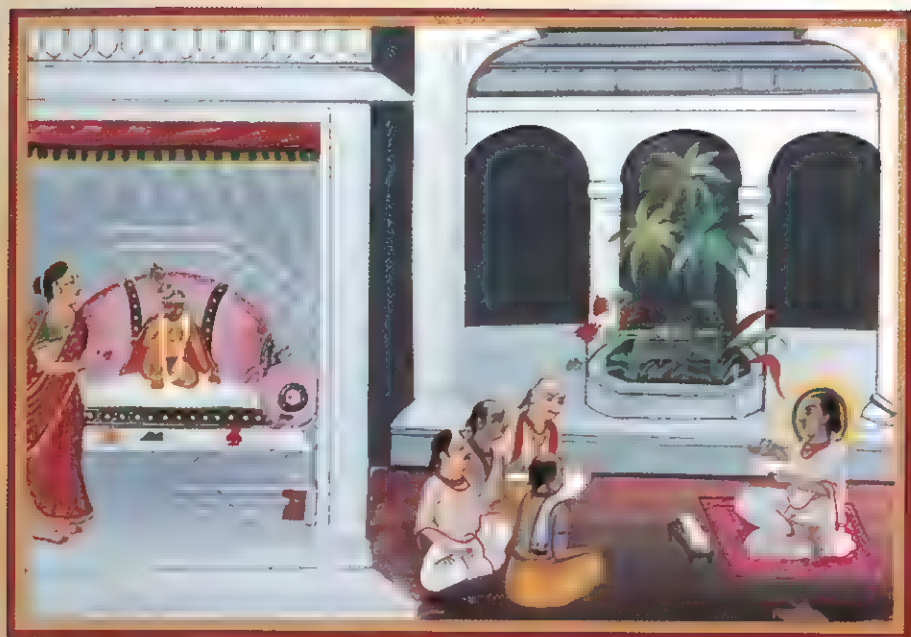
Once when Shri Mahaprabhuji was performing Sandhya at Manikarnika Ghat, on the banks of River Ganga in Kashi, a learned man from Godhra (in Gujarat), Rana Vyas, who was defeated by other pandits came to Kashi with the thought of committing suicide. Krishnadas Meghan on realizing this, asked Shri Mahaprabhuji about the fate of a person committing suicide in Gangaji. Shri Vallabh replied that to commit suicide was a great sin and liberation was not possible even if the suicide was committed by drowning in the Ganga. On hearing this, Rana Vyas realized the truth and fell at the feet of Shri Vallabh and requested him to accept him as his disciple. Shri Mahaprabhuji taught the Chatusloki hymn to Rana Vyas who after learning this hymn, succeeded in all the scholarly debates.

Settlement at Adel

Shri Vallabhacharya decided to settle down in a beautiful and secluded place called Adel, a village in the proximity of the Rivers Ganga and Yamuna, in the vicinity of Allahabad. The place had a peaceful ambience and a sanctity of its own and he was able to continue with his writings uninterrupted. Nearly 20 years of his life were then spent here and he gave many discourses on Srimad Bhagavat. Many learned scholars and pundits used to come here and he used to have discussions on the various subjects like Vedas, Upanishads, etc. Many people approached him to offer their respects and for obtaining his blessings and were inculcated into his sect. His fame as a Guru and Acharya and his divinity had spread far and wide by this time.

Great Poet Soordas Surrenders

Once when Shri Vallabhacharya travelled to Vraj from Adel with his family, and camped at Gaughat, near Agra. a very



At Adel

famous blind poet and singer Soordas came to see him. He asked Soordas to sing the glory of the Lord, but what he sang did not satisfy Shri Mahaprabhuji. Soordas fell at his feet and requested him to make him his disciple. Shri Mahaprabhuji accepted Soordas as his disciple. Bestowing Soordas with a divine vision, Shri Mahaprabhuji graced him immensely and Soordas experienced the bliss of Shri Krishna's divine leelas and composed the most sublime verses ever written by any poet devotee.

By the grace of Shri Mahaprabhuji, Soordas rose to be the most celebrated poet of Hindi literature, a poet of international repute who wrote more than hundred thousand poems. He was a great disciple of Shri Mahaprabhuji and never differentiated between his Guru and Lord Shreenathji. He too, was appointed as a singer in the temple of Shreenathji at Govardhan in Jatipura in Vraj.

Grand Temple of Shreenathji

Once, when Shri Vallabhacharya was at Govardhan (Vraj), a Kshatriya, Seth Pooranmal of Ambala (in Punjab), came to him. Pooranmal was inspired in a dream by Lord Shreenathji to build a grand temple for him on Mount Govardhan at Jatipura. He rushed to Jatipura immediately and narrated his dream of the Lord's order to Shri Mahaprabhuji. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked Seth Pooranmal to immediately start the work. An architect, Hiramani, was called from Agra. On the auspicious day of Vaishakh Shukla Teej (Akshaya Tritiya) of Samavat 1556 under the direction of Shri Mahaprabhuji, the foundation stone for the grand temple of Shreenathji was laid by Pooranmal Kshatriya. The temple took 20 years to complete. The temple was a piece of excellent artistry. It was situated on the top of Mount Govardhan and could be seen from a long distance on all sides. On Vaishakh Shukla Teej (Akshaya Tritiya) of Samavat 1576 according to Hindu calendar, Shri Mahaprabhuji placed the deity of Lord Shreenathji in the newly built temple and with great splendour

* Old name Gopalpur



Shri Shreenathji



Shri Shreenathji 's Shringar on Akshay Tritiya

started the divine services of the Lord. A great number of Vaishnavas reached Govardhan to attend the function. Jatipura was resplendant in its decorations. The people of Jatipura and the entire Vraj were very happy. Shri Mahaprabhuji made proper arrangements for the seva of the Lord. Krishnadas Adhikari was appointed as the administrator and Kumbhandas* as a Kirtaniya who sang the glory of the Leelas of Lord Krishna.

Birth of the First Son

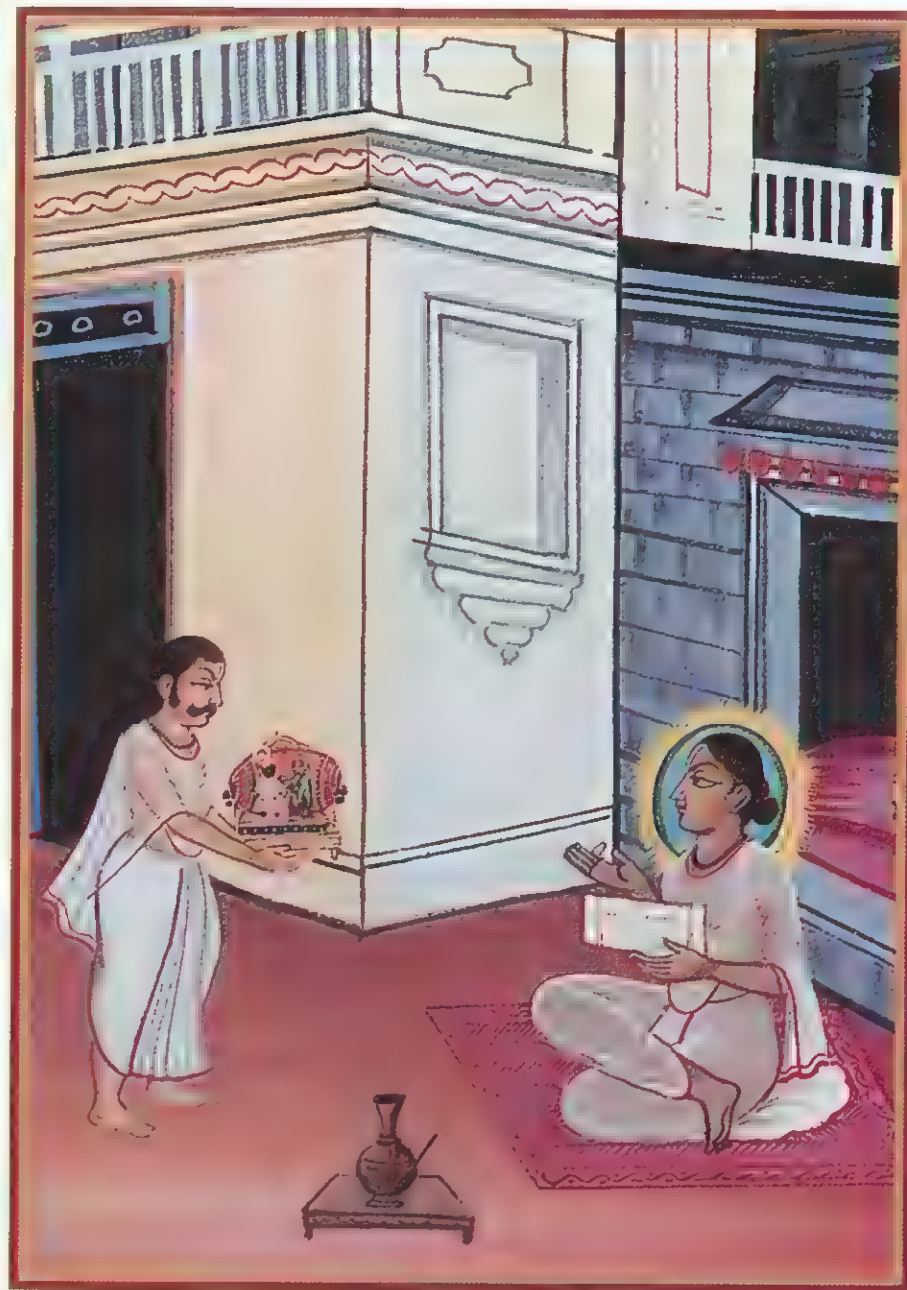
On the 12th day of the Ashwin (Bhadrapad) in Samavat 1567, his eldest son, Shri Gopinathji, was born in Adel. After the naming ceremony of Shri Gopinathji, Shri Mahaprabhuji returned to Kashi. He asked Purushottam Das to make preparations for performing Jyoti-Stom (Som Yagna) at Prayag. He invited all his relatives to attend the Jyoti-Stom at Prayag. He assigned different tasks to all his disciples. After the Som Yagna, he accorded a warm reception to all the people present and gave various gifts to the Brahmins and then he returned to Adel.

Birth of the Second Son

After touring Jagannath Puri with his family, Shri Mahaprabhuji returned to Kashi. Here, the King of Charnadri (present day Charnat or Chunar in the district of Mirzapur in U.P.) came and fell at the feet of Shri Mahaprabhuji. He requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to visit Charnadri where he had built quarters for him. Shri Mahaprabhuji visited and stayed there for some time. On the 9th day of Paush Margshirsha Krishna, in Samavat 1572, he was blessed with a second son.

It was around this day that a saint approached Shri Mahaprabhuji in Charnat and presented him with an idol of Shri Vitthalnathji. On receiving this idol, Shri Mahaprabhuji remembered

* Kumbhandas was the first poet singer graced by Shri Mahaprabhuji and sang the glory of Shreenathji



***A Brahmin (Saint) Presenting the idol of Shri Vitthalnathji.
One day of birth of his second son at Charnat.***

his meeting with Shri Vithalnathji in Pandharpur (that the Lord would appear in his family as his son). Shri Mahaprabhuji decided to name his newborn son as Vitthalnath (later to be known as Shri Gusainji). As the sons grew up, he taught them the essential parts of Sanskrit grammar and narrated to them the important and the basic tenets of the Pushti Sampradaya. Both the brothers were intelligent and in short time memorized their lessons.

Meeting with Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Once, when Shri Vallabhacharya went to Jagannath Puri from Adel, met Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for the first time at the confluence of the River Ganga and the Bay of Bengal. In the discussions that followed, Shri Vallabha-charya advised that one should always chant the name of God, without missing even a second.

Once Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, while touring, reached Adel in the afternoon. He went to the place where Shri Mahaprabhuji had camped. Shri Vallabh cordially recieved him and offered him a seat of honour. Shri Vallabh, then asked Mahalakshmi (his wife) to prepare food for Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. After waiting for a long time for the food, Shri Mahaprabhuji inquired with his wife the cause of delay. She hesitantly replied that the food was ready, but unless it is served to Thakurji (Lord), how could it be served to anyone and Thakurji had just finished the Raj-Bhog¹. Shri Vallabh greatly appreciated the discipline and the sentiment of seva in his wife, and kindly replied that since Shri Krishna always resides in Shri Chaitanya's heart, he will surely enjoy the food offered to him. Hearing this, Mahalakshmi immediately served the food to Shri Chaitanya, who with emotion and reverence embraced Shri Vallabh. Both of them being ardent devotees of Shri Krishna, held each other in high esteem and greatly respected each other. Their staunch Krishna Bhakti made both of them very distinctive personalities of their time.

Madhav Bhatt Kashmiri

Once during one of his tours to Gokul, Shri Mahaprabhuji was giving a discourse on Srimad Bhagavat. There, a pandit from Kashmir named Keshav Bhatt came along with his followers to listen to the discourse. One of the followers of Keshav Bhatt was Madhav Bhatt. Keshav Bhatt was a leading personality of the Nimbarka sect.

Madhav Bhatt used to sit with the vaishnavas to listen to the discourse while Keshav and his other followers used to sit seperately. On seeing the affection of Madhav Bhatt for Shri Mahaprabhuji, Keshav Bhatt gifted his disciple, Madhav Bhatt, to him. After the discourse, Madhav Bhatt became a devout disciple of Shri Mahaprabhuji and forever lived in his service.

Madhav Bhatt was a very fast writer. Subodhini, one of the works of Shri Mahaprabhuji - a commentary on Bhagavat Purana was written by Madhav Bhatt. Shri Mahaprabhuji used to dictate to Madhav Bhatt and he used to write down the dictation.

Honahar, the Great Painter

The muslim ruler, Sikander Lodi, was highly impressed by hearing about the many miracles and divinity of Shri Vallabhacharya. He wished to have a picture of Shri Mahaprabhuji. He asked his painter, Honahar, to paint a portrait of the divine personality. Honahar was considered to be one of the best painter of his time. Honahar arrived at Gokul, where Shri Mahaprabhuji was camping, and giving discourses on Subodhini. Honahar thought of painting this scene. Even after two attempts, he was not able to paint the picture completely. Finally he bowed before Shri Mahaprabhuji and asked for his kindness. With Shri Mahaprabhuji's blessings, he could paint the picture perfectly on the third attempt.

¹ Last meal offered to God before afternoon rest

Emperor Jehangir got this painting from Sikander Lodi into his treasury and Kishangadh's (Rajasthan) Maharaja Nagaridas asked for this painting from Emperor Jehangir. This painting today continues to be in Kishangadh Maharaja's Palace temple where everyday seva is performed according to Pushti marg.

A Call From the Lord

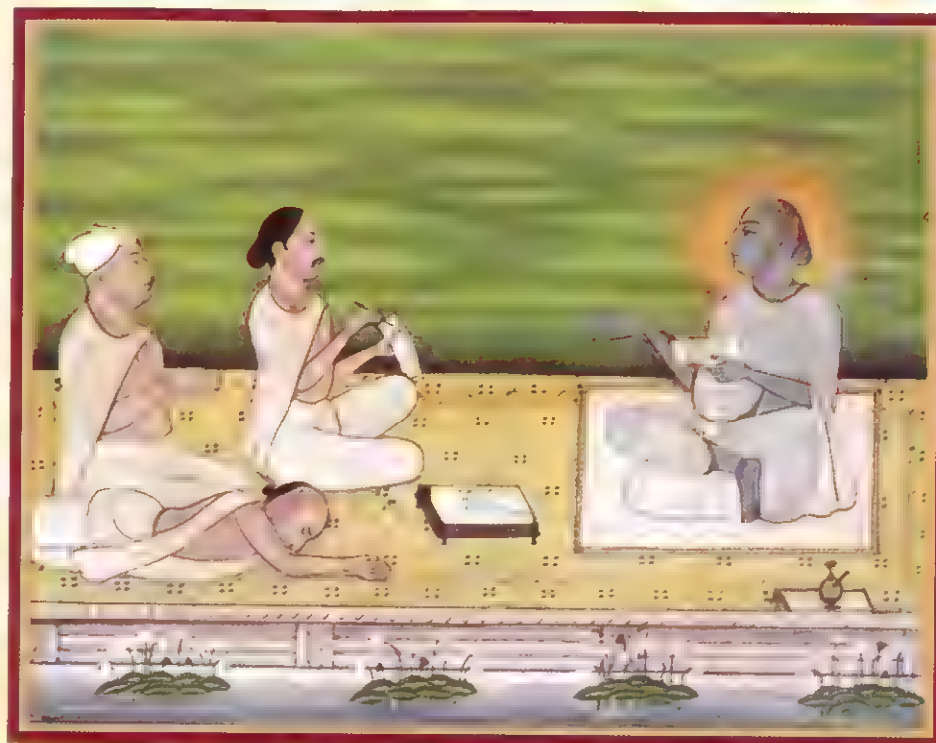
During one of his journeys to Jagannath Puri, Shri Vallabhacharya camped at Ganga-Sagar. Here he received a divine call asking him to renounce the world and return to the Lords divine abode (Lord's Place) - the Golok Dham, as his worldly duties were nearly over. While camping at Madhuvan (Vraj Bhoomi) he received the same call for the third time. It was not possible to delay the matter now and in response to these calls, he planned to give up all his activities and renounce the world.

He informed his mother and his wife about the orders from the Lord. He consoled them and requested them to give their consent for his sanyas, as their permission to leave home was very essential. He appointed and advised Damodardas Hasrani to take care of Vitthanathji and guide him according to the tenets of the Pushti Sampradaya.

Tridanda Sanyas

At the age of 52 years, he accepted sanyas from Madhavopadhyaya according to the method of Bhagavat Sanyas. He was declared to be known as Purnanand. Then on Jyeshtha Krishna 10 of Samavat 1587 (1531 A. D.) Mahaprabhu Shri Vallabhacharya entered into the Tridanda Sanyas¹, which means three sacrifices, viz., Renouncement of Domestic Pleasure, Abnegation of Food, and, Relinquishment of Speech.

* A bright streak of dazzling light



The very first and only one picture was painted by Honhar (Shri Mahaprabhuji, Madhavbhatt Damoderdas and bowing down is Krishnadas Meghau)

For six days he stayed at his own place. and then for eight days on the banks of the River Ganga. Then he went to Kashi for eighteen days. During this tour to Kashi many* vaishnavas joined him. They sang his praise and followed him with the sounds of blowing conches and ringing bells.

At Kashi, he entered the final stage of his sanyas. He stayed at Hanuman Ghat for seven days, with a vow of not speaking to anyone. At that time Shri Gopinathji, Shri Vitthalnathji and many of his disciples came to Hanuman Ghat.



Asur Vyamohlila of Shri Mahaprabhuji

* Followers

Shri Gopinathji and Shri Vitthalnathji asked for orders regarding their duties. In reply, Shri Mahaprabhuji wrote three and a half verses on a slab of stone with a piece of chalk. These verses were known as Shiksha Shlokas.

Delivering his last message, Shri Vallabhacharya began walking in the currents of the River Ganga. A crowd standing on the banks, in deep grief, was witnessing the entrance of Shri Mahaprabhuji into the mid-stream of the river. Thereafter he closed his eyes and meditated upon the Lord in His form of bliss. Gradually, he disappeared in front of everyone. So tragic was the scene that his devotees could barely contain the grief of losing their beloved Guru, tears flowing from their eyes and the grief in their hearts dampened the whole atmosphere.

Immediately after his disappearance, people saw a mass of effulgence* rising upwards towards the sky and thus in the form of that effulgence, he ascended to Golok-Dham, the abode of his Lord.

This was Ashadh Shukla Beej (second day of the bright half of Ashadh - Samvat 1587 (1531 A. D.) when the beloved eternal Guru, the founder of Pushti-Marg, the propagator of Shuddhavaith, and the greatest devotee of Shri Krishna left this mundane world to reside forever in the Golok-Dham, the eternal abode of Shri Krishna.

Shri Mahaprabhuji may not be physically present with us today, but centuries later, Pushti-Marg, and, its principles of pure devotion, the clarity of his vision and the profound understanding of our great religion, keep him alive in the minds and hearts of thousands of devotees all over the world who have chosen to follow him in thoughts, words, and deeds. These principles of Pushti Marg embraced by thousands of Vaishnavas, are the true legacies of the great one who is not only their eternal Guru, but has been revered and loved on the same level as Lord Shri Krishna himself.

* Great Streak Dazzling light

Shri Vallabh's Contribution to the Indian Culture

Staunch propagator of the principles of Srimad Bhagavat Gita, Shri Mahaprabhuji believed that every creature being God's creation and being a part of the same God, is created equal. During the dark periods of Indian social life when there was a deep and unfair discrimination of castes and untouchability was rampant and women's status was at its lowest, Shri Mahaprabhuji rose to uplift every creature and every person spiritually and put them on an equal pedestal of Krishna Bhakti. Pushti Marg embraced people from every caste, creed, and strata of Indian society. Among the prominent followers of Shri Mahaprabhuji, we find examples of women, untouchables, Muslims, Kings, and paupers alike.

All of them rose to become great devotees of Shreenathji, and were blessed by the Lord Himself who manifested especially to play and frolic with his chosen ones. This gave a great force of unity among the Hindus who were divided amongst themselves. To Shri Mahaprabhuji, every creature who loved Shri Krishna truly was his real follower.

He developed in his followers a deep love for a simple living, a life of contentment, and love and faith for Shri Krishna by which every person surrendered himself and all his belongings to the Lord Himself. Shri Mahaprabhuji himself lived a simple and an austere life as shown and advocated in the Gita, and expected the same from his followers. Any wealth, possession, and, any skill or art that a devotee possessed were to be used not for personal pleasure, but for Shri Krishna's pleasures. Thus, he managed to explain and make the people understand the true meaning of self surrender and live a life of faith and love of god. The greatest legacy of Shri. Mahaprabhuji to this world is the Pushti Marg which he has propagated on the basis of Shuddhadvait Brahmapad. Today more than two crore people live their lives based on its divine principles and wor-

ship. Shri Mahaprabhuji as their divine Guru. His followers today are not only in India but span across the seven seas into different parts of the world.

This then is Acharya Shri Mahaprabhuji as we all now know him. A divine Guru, Acharya, Scholar, Philosopher and a giver of a new way of devotion by the name of Pushtimarg.

Shri Mahaprabhuji through the principles of Pushti Marg gives us a way to sublimation of life through total surrender and love at the feet of Shri Krishna. This ultimately leads a person to the heights of bliss by experiencing the divine Leelas of Shri Krishna to be finally immersed into the vast ocean of bliss as experienced by His distinguished 84 devotees. This is altogether a novel way of experiencing a blissful life especially in the present age with the infinite grace of Shri Mahaprabhuji.

Literacy Legacy of Shri Vallabhacharyaji

Shri Vallabhacharyaji, a profound scholar, a wise philosopher, a great teacher and above all the most ardent devotee of Shri Krishna has given us a legacy of great literature. His literacy works are the correct interpretations of our great scriptures and enlighten our path of spiritualism in a very precise accurate way. He never claimed to state anything other than the ancient Vedic scriptures. His works were composed with Srimad Bhagavat, the Vedas, the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras as their basis.

A great religious leader and thinker, his works preached, interpreted and even cleared the misunderstandings of the Hindu religion, while establishing its greatness.

He has a beautifully combined spiritual knowledge and religion, philosophy of non-dualism and Pushti-Marg, and a literature which is unparalleled by any other ever composed in the religious

field. The principles he has imbibed in his works are simple and practical and have their own individuality and beauty.

This literary legacy of his can be divided into five broad sections:

1. Bhashya Literature : (Bhashya Rachna)
 2. Interpretative Works and (Teeka Sahitya) Commentaries
 3. Literature pertaining to philosophy
 4. Literature pertaining to Pushti Marg.
 5. Hymns and Stotras.
-
1. The literature relating to Bhashya are interpreting Brahmasutra and explaining Shuddhadvait Brahmapada
 - *. Anu Bhashya : A well known commentary on famous Vedant Sutras known as Brahma Sutra of Sage Badrayan.
 - *. Poorva Mimansa : Jaimini Bhashya
 - *. Gayatri Bhashya
 2. The Teeka Sahitya consists of interpretations of Srimad Bhagavat - e.g., Shri Subodhini and Bhagavat Sookshma Teeka
 3. The third division is his work on the philosophy of pure non-dualism as written in Tattvarthadeep Nibandh, which is divided into further sections of Tattvarthadeep Nibandh:
 1. Shastrarth Prakarana
 2. Bhagavatharth Prakarana
 3. Sarvanirnay Prakarana, Patravlamban.
 4. His literature establishing the principles of Pushti-Marg are:
 - 1-16. Shodash Granth comprising of 16 sections
 17. Shiksha Shloki

18. Panch Shloki

19. The teachings to King Krishnadeva Raya of Vidyanagar in Andhra Pradesh

5. Shri Mahaprabhuji has also composed beautiful hymns and prayers in Sanskrit:

1. Shri Purushottam Sahastra Naam

2. Trividh Naamavali

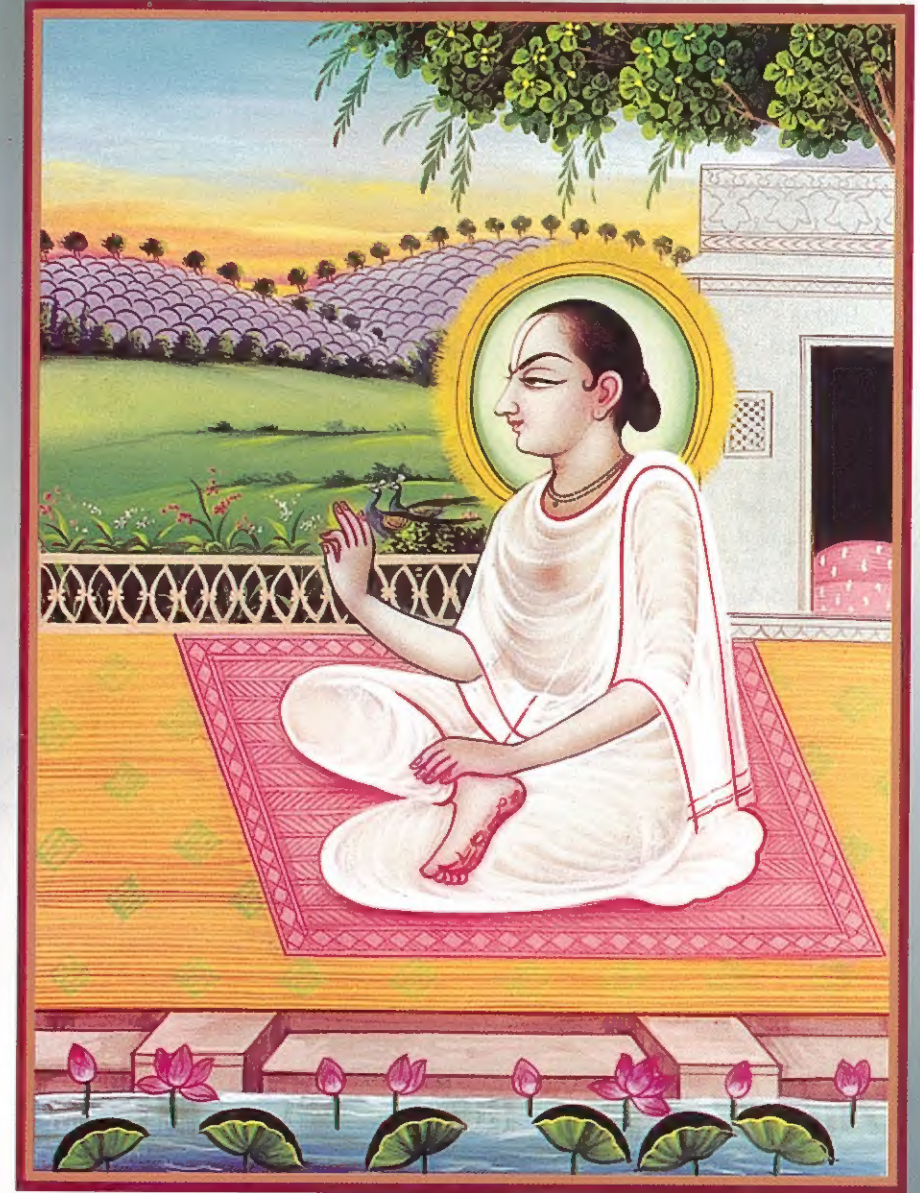
3. Madhurashtakam

4. Dashmash Skandha Anukramanika]

5. Shri Giriraj Dharyashtakam

6. Nandkumarashtak

These literary works establish the greatness and clarity of Pushti-Marg and its founder, Jagadguru Srimad Vallabhacharya. They are the guidelines of a great religion as established by a great thinker, a great philosopher, and above all a great devotee and lover of Shri Krishna who Showed the path of attainment through complete subjugation and devotion to Shri Krishna.



HOLY 84 SEATS OF SHRIMAD VALLABHACHARYA

*The place where Shri Vallabbacharya stayed 3 days or more and received
Shri mad Bhagarat is known as holy seats*

Vraj Bhoomi (U.P.)

1. Gokul - 1st Bethak- Govind Ghat
2. Gokul - 2nd Bethak- Badi Bethak
3. Gokul - 3rd Bethak - Shayan Mandir
4. Brindavan- Bansibat
5. Mathura - Vishram Ghat
6. Madhuva
7. Kamodvan
8. Bahulavan
9. Radhakrishnakund
10. Mansiganga
11. Chandrasarovar
12. Anyor
13. Govindkund
14. Sundershila - Jatipura near Mt. Govardhan
15. Jatipura -on Mt. Govardhan
16. Kamvan - (Rajasthan)
17. Sanketvan
18. Nandgam
19. Gahavarvan - (Near Barasana (Radharani Temple)
20. Kokilavan
21. Bhandirvan
22. Mansarovar

UTTAR PRADESH (U.P.)

23. Sukarkshetra (Soron)
24. Chitrakoot

25. Ayodhya
26. Naimisharanya
27. Kashi - Banaras (Jatanvad)
28. Kashi (Banaras) Hanuman Ghat

29. Haridwar
30. Adel -Near Allahabad
31. Charnat (Chunar)

BIHAR

32. Harihar Kshetra (Haajipur)
33. Janakpur

BENGAL

34. Gangasagar

MADHYA PRADESH (M.P.)

35. Champaranya - Main Bethak (Vallabhacharya birth place)
36. Champaranya (Chhathi Bethak- 6th day ceremony)
37. Avantikapuri (Ujjain)

ORISSA

38. Jagannathpuri

MAHARASHTRA

39. Pandharpur
40. Nasik (Panchavati)

ANDHRA PRADESH

41. Pannanar simha (on Mangalgiri mt.)
42. Laxman Balaji (Tirupathi)
43. Krishna River
44. Pampasarovar
45. Vidyanagar

TAMILNADU

46. Shrirang (Trichinapalli)
47. Vishnu Kanchi (Kanchi)
48. Rameshwaram (Setubaundh)
49. Tamraparni river (Tinvelli)
50. Mt. Totadri (Nainguri village)
51. Darvesanji (Dist. Ramanad)
52. Trilokbhanji (Adisetu)

KARNATAK

53. Malayachal Mt. (Neelgiri-Ooty)
54. Lohghad (Goa)

KERALA

55. Padmanabh (trivendram)
56. Janardan (Varkala)

HARIYANA

57. Kurukhetra

GUJARAT / SAURASHTRA

58. Surat (Ashwini Kumar Ghat)
59. Bharuch

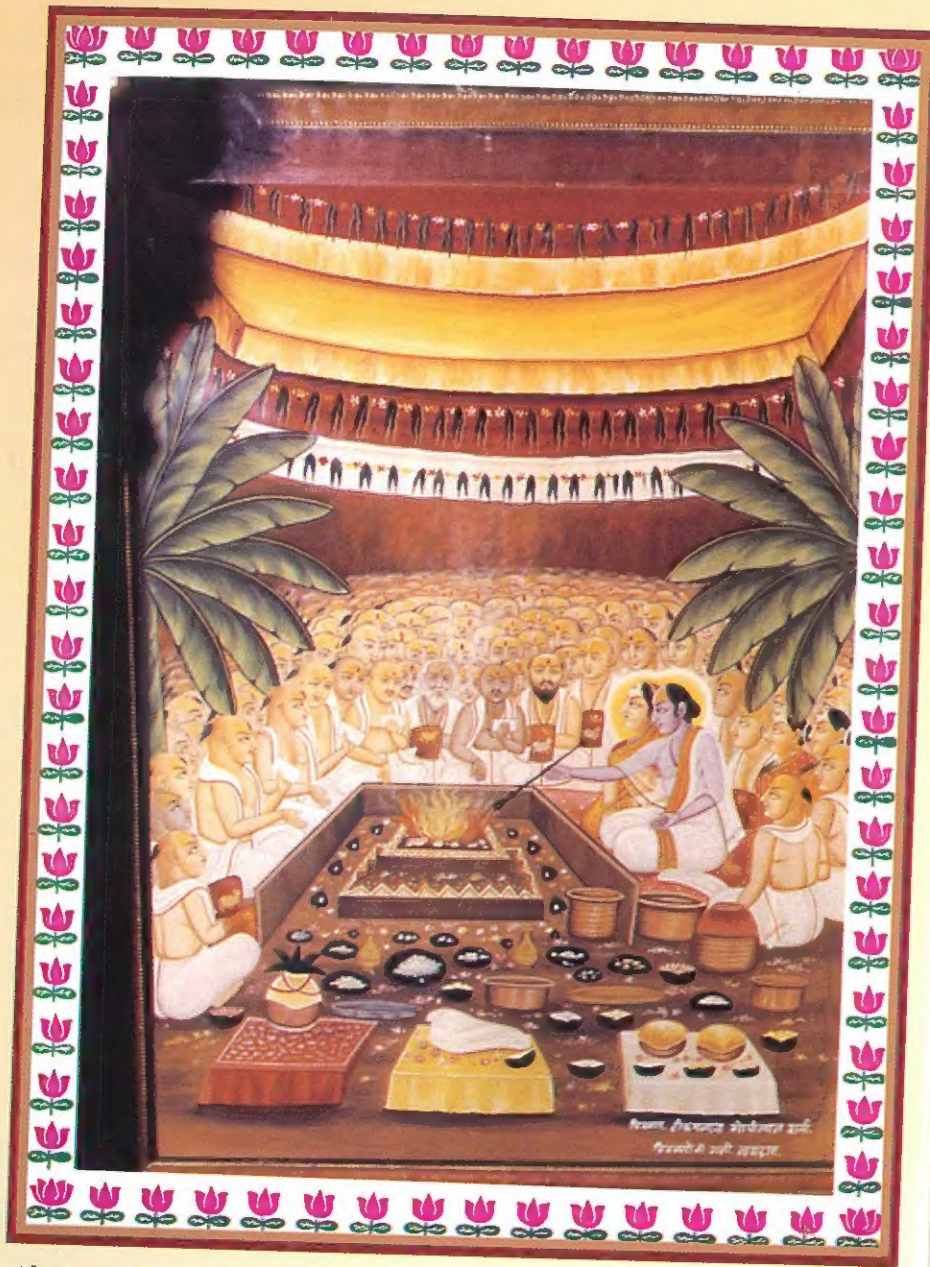
60. Naroda (Ahmedabad)
61. Godhara
66. Kheralu
63. Sidhapur
64. Tagadi (Saurashtra)
65. Morbi
66. Navangar - Jamnagar
67. Jam Khambhalia
68. Pindtarak
69. Mulgomta
70. Dwarka
71. Gopitalao
72. Shankhodwar (Bet Dwarka)
73. Junaghad - Damodar Kund
74. Prabhas Patan
75. Gupt Prayag - Delvada
76. Madhavpur
77. Narayan Sarovar (Kutch)

RAJASTHAN

78. Pushkarji

UTTARANCHAL (HIMACHAL PRADESH)

79. Badrinath
80. Vyasashram
81. Kedarnath
82. Mt. Himalaya
83. Vyas Gauga
84. Mandrachal Mt.



Shrimad Vallabhacharya and Shri Mahalaxmiji performing Yagna